



Yussef el-Guindi's *Back of the Throat*

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The Course of American Literature

The Department of English
The Faculty of Arts
2021-2022



Kafreshikh University
Faculty of Arts
Dept of English



American Literature

Yussef el-Guindi's

Back of the Throat

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Introduction

This book, *American Literature: Yussef el-Guindi's "Back of the Throat,"* comprises three main parts, in addition to this concise introduction and the bibliography. It is designed for third-year-English-major students to identify them with American literature and its current preoccupations.

The first part, "Critical/Dramatic/Literary/Theatrical Terms," tackles a great number of the terms each student must be armed with when dealing with a work of art in general and a play in particular. I have explained them in an easy-to-understand way so that the student can be aware of their meaning when watching a play on the stage or reading it on the page. The student must be *au courant* with such terms to be *au fait* with them in reading and analyzing the literary work—play/novel/poem—appositely.

The second part presents the text of the play as written by the Arab-American playwright and published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc. (January 29, 2007).

The third part includes three critical articles on el-Guindi's play. Enas Jawad's "The Dramatic Representation of Islamophobia in Youssef El-Guindi's *Back of the Throat*," Mohammad Almostafa's "Re-thinking the Stereotypes and Violence Against Arabs and Arab Americans in El Guindi's *Back of the Throat* and Shamieh's *The Black Eyed*," and Ahmed Mohammed's "Exacerbation of Panic Onstage: Ethnic Problems and Human Rights Violations in Yussef El Guindi's *Back of the Throat* (2006)." The three articles point out how Arabs in general and Muslims in particular are passively regarded since the 9/11 attacks.

Dr Khaled Sirwah
Feb. 2022

Part One

Critical/Dramatic/Literary/Theatrical Terms

Abstract

Defined as a “summary” of a document, an **abstract** often precedes an article in an academic or scholarly publication, whether it deals with fine arts, or natural or social sciences. It is simply a short, standalone summary of the work or paper that others can use as an overview. An **abstract** usually uses the vocabulary of the document itself and may even include quotations from it. It is often used to help the readers quickly ascertain the paper’s purpose.

The Theatre of the Absurd

It is a movement which came into prominence after World War II and expressed existentialist philosophy through theatrical style. This experimental theatrical style appeared in the plays of such writers as Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, and Harold Pinter. The word “absurd” refers to the absurd idea/situation, and the grotesque and ludicrous elements upon which many absurd plays are based.

If a traditional play must have a clearly constructed story, the absurd play has no story or plot to describe. If a traditional play has a fully explained theme (that is neatly exposed and finally resolved), the absurd one has neither a beginning nor an end. If a traditional play is judged by the subtlety of characterization, the absurd one is often without recognizable characters. If a traditional play is a real reflection of nature and a portrayal of the manners of the age, the absurd one seems often to be a reflection of dreams and nightmares. If a traditional play rests on witty repartee and pointed dialogue, the absurd one often consists of incoherent ideas and *non sequiters*.

Moreover, in absurd theatre, characters are without knowledge of who they are or where they came from; they lack the wit or ability to take experience into the meaningless world and create a meaning for themselves. The nature of the absurd tends towards a radical devaluation of language. Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, Pinter’s *No Man’s Land*, and Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* are good examples of the Theatre of Absurd.

Accent

Meaning an emphasis or stress put on a particular syllable or word, an **accent** refers to the manner of speaking or pronunciation differentiating a person from another.

Act

It is a major division in the action of a play. According to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, a play is divided into five acts (and each act is in turn divided into varying numbers of shorter scenes). But the number of acts is reduced in the 19th century; most modern plays employ three acts and many have only two or eliminate act structure entirely using scene divisions. However, the ends of acts are traditionally indicated by lowering the curtain or turning up the houselights. Playwrights employ acts to accommodate changes in time, setting, characters, and/or mood.

Acting Style

The term refers to a particular manner of acting which reflects cultural and historical influences.

Action

It is the main sequence of developing events in any story, most often in relation to drama. A distinction is made between the physical and the psychological actions, consisting of a character's internal conflicts or the clash of wills between characters. In *Hamlet*, for example, the psychical action is great but this external action stems from the equally significant inner action involving the self-doubts of both Hamlet and Claudius. Between them, a psychological as well as political struggle increases, struggles from which the tragic circumstances emerge. The question of whether the outer action (represented by plot) or the inner action (represented by characters) is more important has been much debated; it has not been—nor is it likely to be—settled.

Actor

An **actor** is a performer who assumes the role of a character in a play, film, or television show. A **female actor** may be called an **actress**.

Ad-lib

The term means to improvise lines that are not part of the written script; also refers to the improvised line. The lines Hamlet inserts/ad-libs to the play-within-the-play—*The Murder of Gonzago*—can be regarded as **ad-libs** or **ad-libbed** lines.

Amphitheatre

It is a type of stage with an oval or round structure with no roof and with tiers of seating rising from the centre.

Analysis

Related to dramatic art, **analysis** is the process of examining how the elements of drama—literary, technical, and performance—are used.

Antagonist

Coming from Greek and meaning “opponent,” “competitor” or “rival,” **antagonist** is a character, or a group of characters, which stands in opposition to the protagonist, which is the main character. A good example of an **antagonist** is the character of Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Iago stands as one of the most notorious villains of all time, having spent all of his time plotting against Othello, the protagonist, and his wife Desdemona. However, the **antagonist** does not have to be human. It could be nature, society, the supernatural, technology, *etc.*

Antihero

A protagonist who has the opposite of most of the qualities (such as courage, idealism, and perseverance). He/She is frequently bewildered, ineffectual, deluded, or merely pathetic. In drama, the middle- or working-class protagonists of modern tragedies, such as Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, may be called anti-heroes.

Apologia

Related to the concept of “apology,” but in many cases the precise *opposite* of an apology, **apologia** is a defense of one's conduct or opinions. When you apologize, you are saying “I did the wrong thing and I regret it.” But in an **apologia**, you are *defending yourself*, either by saying that what you did was not wrong or denying that you were responsible for what happened.

Aside

An **aside** is a short passage spoken in an undertone by a character in a play. Often directed to the audience to inform them of the character's plans, intentions, and goals, the aside is presumed to be inaudible to other characters on the stage. It is presumed also to be true, for the character usually tends to reveal his/her thoughts only to the audience. **Asides** are important because they increase an audience's involvement in a play giving them vital and necessary information about what is happening both inside a character's mind and in the plot of the play. When Hamlet appears first onstage, he comments on Claudius' words with his aside: "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (I. ii. 64-5).

Audience

The term refers to the people for whom a piece of literature is written. Authors usually write with a certain audience in mind, for example, children, young women, or colleagues in a professional field. The term "audience" applies more to the people who gather to see/hear any performance, including plays. Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound*, for instance, seems to be intended for (and also pokes fun at) an audience of drama critics.

Auditorium

Also called the **house**, an **auditorium** means the part of the theatre in which the audience sits

Autobiography

It is an account of one's own life, generally a continuous narrative of major events. Reading **autobiographies** may be more interesting than *biographies* because you are reading the thoughts of the person instead of someone else's interpretation. An **autobiography** differs from a memoir, which has a different focus, or a diary and journal—both of which lack continuity and are generally kept for the author's private purposes. There is no prescribed form or subject matter for an **autobiography** other than the author's experience of life. Given this, one can regard T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and W. B. Yeats' *Collected Poems* as "spiritual autobiographies." An **autobiography** can be grouped as literature of personal revelation. It is different from a biography.

Backstage

It is the area behind/beyond the stage that includes dressing rooms and wings.

Biography

It is an account of a particular man's life—the life story of a person written by someone else. Some people may have their life story written by another person because they do not believe they can write well, but they are still considered an author because they are providing the information. The modern **biography** differs from the classical and medieval biographies. The modern **biography** is based on careful research and is relatively dispassionate in attitude. The classical and medieval biographies were generally written to illustrate a thesis.

Black Box

It is a one-room theatre, without a proscenium arch; the interior is painted black, including walls, floor, and ceiling, and any drapes are also black.

Bombast

It is an inflated, exaggerated language, such as an unsuccessful hyperbole or diction that is more grandiose than the emotion warrants.

Bunraku

Bunraku (and also **Banraku**) refers to the traditional Japanese puppet theatre. Each puppet is about one metre tall and is manipulated by up to three people, with each person responsible for a different part of the puppet. Their efforts make the puppets appear alive despite the fact that the puppeteers are visible on the stage. **Bunraku** plays are accompanied by the music of traditional Japanese instruments.

Burlesque

It is a work designed to ridicule attitudes, styles, or subject matters by handling either an elevated subject in a *trivial* manner or a low subject with *mock* dignity. **Burlesque** is the general term for two various types of satirical imitation—the most two important types of burlesque—**parody** and **travesty**.

Catharsis

Meaning “cleansing” in Greek, **catharsis** refers to a literary theory first developed by Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, who believed that cleansing our emotions was the purpose of a good story, especially a tragedy. **Catharsis** applies to any form of art/media that makes us feel strong negative emotions, but that we are nonetheless drawn to—we may seek out art that creates these emotions because the experience purges the emotions from our system.

Character

It is the invented, imaginary person given human qualities and behaviour in a dramatic or narrative work. Characters are important because they are the writer’s medium through which the reader interacts with a piece of literature. Every character has his/her own personality which the writer uses to assist in forming the plot or story of his work. Therefore, through dialogue, action, and description, we can understand and analyse characters.

A **static character** does not change throughout the work, and the reader’s knowledge of that character does not grow, whereas a **dynamic character** undergoes some kind of change due to the action in the plot. A **flat character** embodies one or two qualities or traits that can be simply and briefly described. Not psychologically complex, flat characters are readily accessible to readers. Some flat characters are recognized as **stock characters**; they embody stereotypes such as the “braggart soldier” or the “mean stepfather.” A **round character** is more complex than a flat or stock character, and often displays the inconsistencies and internal conflicts found in most real people. Round characters are more fully developed and, therefore, harder to describe or summarize.

The **character** is also a literary genre. It is the behaviour and distinctive quality which places the character into a group. It is the initial personality (or persona) an author establishes when composing characters for his/her story, play, *etc.*

Characterization

It is a writer’s tool or “literary device” that occurs any time the author uses details to teach us about a person. This is used over the course of a story in order to tell the tale.

Aristotle first defined **characterization**, speaking of the importance of plot over character in *Poetics*, “Tragedy is representation, not of men, but of action and life.” What he means here is that “tragedy” (or drama, meaning a story) is not centered on the thoughts, and histories, and dreams of the characters. The story is centered on what happens to them (the plot), so writers employ **characterization** to relay information about those thoughts, histories, and dreams, without drifting away from the action.

The difference between **character** and **characterization** is that a **character** is a person, an animal, or an imaginary creature that takes part in the action of a literary work and **characterization** is all the techniques a writer uses to create and develop a character.

Chorus

In the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the **chorus** is a group of characters representing ordinary people who serve as bystanders and commentators. They comment on the characters and events of a play and add to the audience’s understanding by expressing traditional, moral, religious, and social attitudes. In *Antigone*, for instance, the chorus has a positive role by commenting objectively on the action of the play.

Before its special use in the theatre, the **chorus** had been participants in Greek religious festivals, dancing and chanting. In modern drama, the **chorus** is fairly rare, though **choral characters** are common enough. We find it in, for example, Milton’s **closet drama** *Samson Agonistes* and T. S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Classic

The word “classic” literally means “excellent,” “superior,” or “first class.” In a general sense, the term “classic” denotes any artistic achievement of a permanent excellence. “Classic” may generally be used to refer to a work of the highest class—a work suitable for the study in school classes.

The first writer known to have used this word is Aulus Gellius, a second-century Roman author who was much concerned with the correctness of various sorts. In his fragments, *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius refers to “*classicus...scriptor, not proletarius*,” and since “*classicus*” means “excellent,” “superior,” “first class,” and “*proletarius*” refers to the “rabble,” he is thus differentiating between a writer who writes for the high class and another who caters for the ordinary audience. “Classic” can be further used to describe a writer, for Alexander Pope writes: “Who lasts a century can have no flaw:/I hold that Wit a classic, good in law.” More specifically, the adjective “classical” refers to the art and literature of ancient Greece and Rome.

Classical Drama

Formally, the term refers the theatrical traditions of ancient Greece and Rome (800 BCE-400 AD), which together form the foundations of dramatic performance in Western literature. The plays of the classical period instruct and present the universal ideal of beauty through logic, order, reason, and moderation. Tragedy was born during this period. Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides are the most prominent playwrights of the period.

Classicism

There is a misconception confining the meaning of **classicism** to the elements discussed in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, that each writer (to be classified as classical) must root and branch adhere to the criteria set in it. On the contrary, *Poetics*, the first great critical

work, is just a study or reflection on the tragedies or dramas, in general, written by the people contemporary with its author, Aristotle. Moreover, since Gellius belongs to the second century after Christ, this indicates that the term has no association with Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Classicism is a broad term. It may be traditionally used to summarize the general characteristics of the classic art and literature of ancient Rome and Greece. But it is generally used to indicate certain qualities/features. The most outstanding of these features are **tradition**, how far a writer is influenced by his predecessors and to what extent his successors are by him; **reason and clarity of thought**, which are always referring to the four rules put by Rene Descartes: the rule of evidence, the rule of analysis, the rule of synthesis, and the rule of control; *mimesis*, which means **realism** on the one hand, or the representation of real life in literature on the other.

Cliché

It is a boring phrase, expression, or idea made tedious and trite by overuse. Examples in ordinary speech are "in the fullness of time" and "with all due respect."

Climax

It is the point of greatest intensity in a series or progression of events in a play, often forming the turning point of the plot and leading to some kind of resolution.

Closet Drama

It is a literary work—in the form of a play—written to be read rather than performed on stage. In this kind of drama, literary art outweighs all other considerations. Therefore, it survives as literature rather than as theatre. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is a notable example of closet drama.

Comedy

It is a literary work—especially a play, less exalted and less serious than a tragedy—which is amusing and ends happily. **High comedy** refers to verbal wit, puns, repartees, and parodies, whereas **low comedy** is associated with physical action and is less intellectual. **Romantic comedy** always involves a love affair met with various obstacles (like disapproving parents, mistaken identities, deceptions, or any other sort of traditional misunderstanding) but overcomes them to end in a happy way. Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *All's Well That Ends Well* are good examples of (Romantic) comedy.

Comic Relief

The term refers to a humorous scene, incident, speech, or element inserted into a tragic work, especially a play, to alleviate tension. Two prominent examples can be seen in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Hamlet's conversation with the gravediggers, which provides a laughter, alleviates the tragic air and hence prepares for the funeral of Ophelia. Likewise, the drunken porter's speech in *Macbeth* brings back the world of normality after the murder of Duncan. The **comic relief**, however, overbalances a play.

Confidant

A stock character in drama and fiction, **confidant** means a trusted friend to whom the protagonist reveals his most intimate feelings and intentions. The **confidant** is the writer's device for allowing the audience to learn of the motives and developments in the play. Hamlet, for example, takes Horatio into confidence and reveals to him (and,

of course, to the audience) every bit about his plans and intentions. In fact, *confidant* is used for males and *confidante* for females.

Conflict

The term refers to the struggle within the plot between two opposing forces in drama and fiction. The **conflict** may occur: (1) within one character (as in *Macbeth* between Macbeth's reverence for Duncan and his desire to kill him) and this kind of conflict is called the "interior/inner conflict"; (2) between two characters—the protagonist and the antagonist, for example—as in Stoppard's *Jumpers* between George Moore the professor of moral philosophy and Archie Jumper, his antagonist; and (3) between a character and society as in Stoppard's *Enter a Free Man* between George Riley and society. Seldom do we find a simple, single conflict, but rather a complex one including two or even all of the proceeding elements. Of course, the conflict is the base on which the plot is constructed.

Denouement

It is the final unraveling of a plot or the solution of a mystery. The *denouement* implies an ingenious untying of the knot of an intrigue, involving not only a satisfying outcome of the main situation but an explanation of all the secrets and misunderstandings connected with the plot complication.

Deus ex Machina

In Greek drama, it is the introduction of a god or other personage onto the stage—usually by a mechanical contrivance—to rescue the hero or untangle the plot. Whereas Euripides uses this device in 9 of his 18 extant plays, Aeschylus and Sophocles avoid it in most of theirs. In *Poetics*, Aristotle, condemning the use of the *deus ex machina*, argues that the *denouement* of the plot must grow from the action itself. The term, by extension, refers to any artificial device for the easy resolution of all difficulties. Serious modern writers avoid the *deus ex machina*, though it has sometimes been used in comedy.

Dialogue

It is a verbal exchange between characters in a literary work, particularly a play and narrative. It helps to characterize the personality of the speakers by making them seem real to the reader/audience and revealing firsthand their thoughts, responses, social classes, and education. The **dialogue**, therefore, gives literature a more natural, conversational flow, which makes it more readable and enjoyable. In a word, the **dialogue** is the thin line differentiating a play from a novel which rests more on narration.

Double Entendre

A *double entendre* is much like what it sounds like—a double meaning or interpretation for a word, phrase, or figure of speech. Usually, the first meaning is straightforward, but can be interpreted in a second way, which the Oxford Dictionary calls "indelicate"—meaning it is usually at least slightly inappropriate or risqué. Often, *double entendres* are used to mask or subtly deliver racy humour.

Using a *double entendre* requires clever and skillfully devised rhetoric—its success relies on the proper planning and delivery of just the right language at just the right time. In fact, many *double entendres* can be very subtle, so that only certain characters and certain members of the audience understand its double meaning and "get

the joke.” A lot of times that humour is in the subtlety itself. Imagine this comedic scene as an example:

At a local farmer’s market, a woman is working at a fruit stand. A man walks up....

Man: “Wow, those are some huge melons you’ve got there. Did you grow them yourself? Can I see one?”

Woman: “EXCUSE ME?”

Man points to a pile of watermelons behind her

Man: “The watermelons, can I see one?”

Woman: “Oh, yes, of course. Here you go.”

What happens in this scene is a common scenario in comedy. The man means one thing, but the language he uses forms a *double entendre* and the woman thinks he is saying something inappropriate!

Downstage

It is the front of the stage is called **downstage** and the rear of the stage is called **upstage**.

Drama

Derived from the Greek word *dram*, meaning “to do” or “to perform,” the term “**drama**” refers generally to any form of literature designed to be performed on a stage by actors. More strictly, a **drama** is a serious play (though it may end happily or unhappily). However, the term may refer to a single word (*Hamlet* is a good drama), a group of plays (Jacobean drama), or to all plays (world drama).

The terms **drama** and **theatre** may be wrongly used interchangeably by some people. In brief words, **drama** refers to the printed text of a play, while the **theatre** is the actual production of the play. Although both of them are related to performing arts, **drama** refers to a text written on the page, while **the theatre** refers to a text performed on the stage. While the former is a genre, the latter encompasses everything happening on a stage for entertainment, edification, education and enjoyment of an audience. Thus, theatre can refer to mime, dance, opera, circus, musical, cabaret, *etc.* Thus drama is a form of theatre, rather than the other way around.

Dramatis Personae

It is a Latin term for the characters of the play. It is a list of the characters, with an indication of their relationships, printed at the beginning of a play.

Dramatist

The word **dramatist** formally means a playwright, composer, or lyricist who takes an existing story and transforms it into a play. The difference between a **dramatist** and a **playwright** is that the latter is confined to the person who writes plays, while the former, widely speaking, includes all people involved in dramatic work—the playwright, the director, the cameraman, the scenarist, *etc.*

Dramaturg

Dramaturg/Dramaturge is a person who assists the director by researching the context of a play, including the historical periods and biographical information about the playwright. It also means the person who assists the playwright with clarifying and revising the script in progress.

Dramaturgy

The term means the composition of plays. Though the term comes from an old word, *dramaturge*, it is sometimes used to include the acting as well as writing of drama, practice and theory.

Dumb Show

It is a feature not uncommon to medieval and Renaissance drama. It refers to that part of a play performed in pantomime as a summary of the plot or an indication of the theme. In *Hamlet*, for example, the **dumb show** precedes the play-within-the-play (*The Murder of Gonzago*) planned by Hamlet to be presented before Claudius and Gertrude. It intends to help the audience follow what is to happen by giving them a synopsis of what happened before.

Elements of Drama

The elements of drama, by which dramatic works can be analyzed and evaluated, can be categorized into three major areas: literary elements, technical elements, and performance elements. **Literary elements** include story line (plot), character, story organization (beginning, middle, end), plot structures (rising action, turning point, falling action), conflict, suspense, theme, language, style, dialogue, and monologue. **Technical elements** include scenery (set), costumes, props, lights, sound, music, and makeup. **Performance elements** include acting (*e.g.*, character motivation and analysis, empathy), speaking (breath control, vocal expression and inflection, projection, speaking style, diction), and nonverbal expression (gestures, body alignment, facial expression, character blocking, movement).

Epilogue

It is the speech given to the audience by an actor after the formal action of the play is concluded.

Epitome

Coming from Greek and meaning "to cut short," **epitome** is a summary or miniature form, or an instance that represents a larger reality, also used as a synonym for embodiment. Epitomacy represents, "to the degree of."

Exposition

The term means the section of a plot at the start of a play which provides essential background information about the characters, their situation, and their relationships to each other.

Fantasy

Coming from Greek and meaning "making visible," **fantasy** is a genre of **fiction** that concentrates on imaginary elements (the fantastic). This can mean magic, the supernatural, alternate worlds, superheroes, monsters, fairies, magical creatures, mythological heroes—essentially, anything that an author can imagine outside of reality. With fantasy, the magical or supernatural elements serve as the foundation of the plot, setting, characterization, or storyline in general. Nowadays, fantasy is popular across a huge range of media—film, television, comic books, games, art, and literature—but, it is predominate and most influential place has always been in literature. However, **fantasy** stories can be about anything, anywhere, anytime with essentially no limitations on what is possible.

Farce

The term refers to any play which evokes laughter by such devices of **low comedy** as physical buffoonery, rough wit, or the creation of ludicrous situations. The mistaken identity is often an element in the plot. Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* is almost entirely farcical, but many plays which are not farces, such as *Twelfth Night*, contain farcical elements, like the mock duel between Viola and Sir Andrew.

Slapstick humour and physical comedy are also common features of a **farce**. Although most farces are comedies, there is such a thing as a "tragic farce." In a tragic farce, the humour is always very bleak, but still present—it's a kind of "laugh so you don't cry" situation. The adjective for "farce" is "farcical."

Flashback

A term borrowed from films, **flashback** is a scene inserted into a film, play, etc showing events which happened at an earlier time.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing occurs where future events in a story, or perhaps the outcome, are suggested by the author before they happen. **Foreshadowing** can take many forms and be accomplished in many ways, with varying degrees of subtlety. However, if the outcome is deliberately and explicitly revealed early in a story (such as by the use of a narrator or flashback structure), such information does not constitute foreshadowing.

Genre

It refers to the kind or class to which a literary work belongs. Works are sometimes classified by subject—thus, **carpe diem** poems can be seen to constitute a **genre**—but the more usual classification is by form and treatment. Some of the recognized genres are epic, tragedy, comedy, lyric, *etc.*

Gesture

It is a body or facial movement of a character during a play. The **gesture** can be described by the author or suggested by the director or actor.

Hero/Heroine

It is the central character in a work of art. Traditionally, the **hero** has such positive qualities as courage, idealism, and perseverance. Tragedy usually focuses on a single figure; in comedy, the interest is usually dispersed over several characters. For example, Achilles and Odysseus are two outstanding heroes in Greek drama.

Imagery

It refers to language which describes something in detail, using words to substitute for and create sensory stimulation, including visual imagery and sound imagery. It also refers to specific and recurring types of images, such as food imagery and nature imagery.

Intention

Judgments about the author's **intention** appear in the processes of interpretation and evaluation of literary works. In referring to the meaning of a literary work, one should distinguish between the meaning of the work itself (actual meaning) and the meaning intended by the author (intentional meaning).

Interpretation

The term means the determination of meaning in a literary work; in responding to dramatic art, the process of identifying the point, ideas, or themes in the play and how the plot relates to the major idea or theme. In a dramatic production, the director, and perhaps others, will decide how to interpret the play for the audience.

Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality is often associated with postmodernism in literature. Under the title “Tradition and the Postdramatic Talent”—very much reminiscent of T. S. Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent”—Hans-Thies Lehmann alludes to intertextuality: “Art in general cannot develop without reference to earlier forms. ...recourse to earlier forms within new forms” (27). For postmodernists, no text is an island. In her “The Bounded Text” (1967), Julia Kristeva, dealing with the process of creating a text, argues that authors are not completely original and the texts they create do not spring full-armed from their original minds but are compiled from the already existing texts (36). The great majority of definitions put for intertextuality revolve around Kristeva’s idea. Norman Fairclough argues that “intertextuality is the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text—quotations” (39), Charles Bazerman sees it as “the relation each text has to the texts surrounding it” (83), and Yulia Volynets similarly defines it as “the relationship that exists between one text and the other texts” (2). In other words, intertextuality maintains that a text is not a self-contained unit of meaning but a heterogeneous combination of texts and, hence, cannot be detached from other texts—a view reinstating that of Eliot. However, the similarity between intertextuality and Eliot’s notion has been tackled in detail by Adolphe Haberer in his paper (55-7).

Kristeva elaborates intertextuality in terms of a horizontal and vertical axis. In the former, the communication takes place between the author and the reader; in the latter, the communication takes place between the text and other texts (66). As relevant to the present context of research, the vertical dimension in Kristeva’s classification is well elucidated by Maria J. M. Alfaro:

There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text. The concept of intertextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures. (268)

However, reading Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality as referring to the presence in a text of another text, Gerard Genette argues that the term is inadequate and proposes the more global term of transtextuality. Among the five subcategories (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, archtextuality, and hyper-textuality) Genette offers for his new term (Alfaro 280-81), only intertextuality and metatextuality are more related to the current research. Maria Alfaro offers an explanation of the two concepts:

Intertextuality: the relation of co-presence between two or more texts, that is, the effective presence of one text in another which takes place by means of plagiarism, quotation or allusion.... *Metatextuality*: the relation, usually called ‘commentary,’ which links one text with another that comments on it without quoting it or, even, without mentioning it at all. It is the critical relation *par excellence*. (280-1)

Moreover, as a prominent aspect in many postmodern literary works, intertextuality is done through parody or pastiche. In case of parody, it is a process where a work is being imitated with playful satire or, to quote Linda Hutcheon, “repetition with critical

distance that allows ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity” (*Poetics* 26); whereas pastiche, like collage, imitates a work in order to make use of its style.

Discussing “How Texts Rely on Other Texts,” Bazerman not only touches upon different levels of intertextuality but also negotiates the techniques of intertextual representation. The text may draw on other texts as “a source of meanings to be used at face value”; draw on “social dramas of prior texts” to “portray an intertextual social drama”; “use other statements as background, support, and to confirm events, or uses quotations from a work of literature to support an analysis”; “rely on beliefs, issues, ideas, statements generally circulated to deal with problem of youth”; use “recognizable kinds of language, phrasing, and genres” to evoke particular social worlds”; and rely “on the available language of the period” to show the text as part of the cultural world of the time” (3-4). Volynets argues that intertextuality is used as “a powerful tool” for writers’ “own purposes: to suggest biased interpretations of facts, to make texts more persuasive, to detach themselves from what is said or to adopt somebody else’s words as if they were their own (8). Among the reasons why a writer would use intertextuality and/or metatextuality are giving homage to previous writers, revisiting or challenging them, using them as an inspiration, or mocking them. As for the techniques, they include direct quotation, indirect quotation, mentioning of a person, document or statement, comment or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise invoked voice, using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular document, and using language and forms that seem to echo certain way of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents (Bazerman 5). (For a full documentation of the references mentioned here see Khaled Sirwah’s paper “Multiculturalism Satirized in Richard Bean’s *England People Very Nice*: A Postmodern Study” in *Studies on Contemporary Theatre* (2019)).

Interval

Known in the United States as **Intermission**, **interval** is a break between the sections of a performance. During a play, the **interval** is normally half way through a standard length performance (approximately 1 hour each half) and is usually 15 or 20 minutes in duration.

Irony

The term is generally defined as a device by which a writer expresses a meaning contradictory to the stated or ostensible one. There are three forms of irony: **irony of situation (situational irony)**, **dramatic irony**, and **verbal irony**. **Irony of situation** is the irony in which there is a discrepancy between what is reasonably expected and what actually occurs—between the appearance of a situation and its reality. For example, Macbeth murders his king hoping that in becoming a king he will achieve peace and happiness for himself. Actually, he never feels any moment of peace, and finally is beheaded for his murderous act. In **dramatic irony**, the audience of the play know something not known by the main character. For example, we audience know that Oedipus is the very murderer of Laius Oedipus himself is searching for throughout the course of the play! Again, the identity of the murderer in a crime thriller may be known to the audience in advance before the mystery is solved. In **verbal irony**, the contrast is between what is said and what is meant. For example, one may refer to some girl as “beauty queen” when he is actually meaning that she is “ugly.” **Sarcasm** is a form of **verbal irony** that can be defined as a derisive expression whereby what is stated is the opposite of what is actually meant.

Kabuki

The term refers to the popular theatre of Japan which developed out of Noh theatre in the 17th century. In ***Kabuki theatre***, actors use exaggerated and stylized makeup, costumes, gestures, speech, and special effects to portray traditional character roles and story lines.

Literary Device

It is any specific aspect of literature or a particular work, which we can recognize, identify, interpret and/or analyze. Both literary elements and literary techniques can rightly be called literary devices.

Literary Techniques

The term refers to specific, deliberate constructions of language which an author uses to convey meaning. An author's use of a **literary technique** usually occurs with a single word or phrase, or a particular group of words or phrases, at one single point in a text. Unlike literary elements, **literary techniques** are not necessarily present in every text.

Literary Tradition

Martin Gray refers to the concept of literary tradition by the term "Influence" which he defines as "a writer's conscious or unconscious debt to those who have written before, observable in echoes and imitation of subject matter or style, or via explicit statement or allusion" (Gray 149). In his "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), T. S. Eliot, argues that tradition entails the beliefs and practices of culture as well as the fact that it is not derived from a single, stable origin. It is the awareness of the meaning and significance of the entire living literature of the past for the present, and literature not of one country alone but of others as well, and a genius must submit his individuality, his personal angularities, peculiarities, strange oddities to this living tradition. This however does not mean that tradition has to follow blindly the ways of the authors of the past. Eliot clarifies:

Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in first place, the historical sense...and the historical sense involves perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. (Eliot 14)

The substance of Eliot's argument here is that the past by itself does not constitute "tradition"; the whole of the past literature does not make "tradition." The literature of the past which is of significance in the present constitutes "tradition" for the living author. It is not easy to determine which authors, which forms and which parts of the literature of the past have significance for the author writing in the present. He must work for it; and he must work hard and intelligently to discover the presence of the past. He can achieve this sense only when he is fully responsive to the present literary climate in its affinity with the literature of the past. The most important point is the awareness of the simultaneity of the past and present, of that past which is relevant to the interpretation and understanding of the present.

The importance of tradition for the artist or poet comes to be more prominent when his work of art is to be judged. His work should not be estimated in isolation, but it should be viewed in the context of the whole tradition: "No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (15). This is the point: to consider a work of art in the context of the tradition to which it belongs and not in isolation.

In any discussion of tradition, one must be aware of the fact that it is not derived from a single, stable origin. When a new work of art is created, it adds to tradition:

What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it.... The existing order is complete before the new work arrives, for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted. (15)

This aforementioned fact is emphasized by Gerard Bruns who argues that tradition is "not a structure of any sort but is just the historicity of open-ended, intersecting, competing narratives that cannot be mastered by any Great Code" (Bruns 11). Michael R. Molino writes:

Tradition...is a palimpsest of discursive surfaces, not something written and then erased, but something written and written again, one layer on top of the other. As each new layer of the palimpsest is written, certain portions seep through or in some way influence the layers that follow. (Molino 6)

Medieval Drama

Classical drama ended with the fall of Rome, but drama was reborn during the Medieval period, growing out of religious ceremony. **Medieval drama** instructed in Christian faith, appealed to emotions, and stressed the importance of religion. Morality plays, such *Everyman*, are an example.

Melodrama

Coined in the 18th century from the Greek *melos*—meaning "song"—and *drama*, the term is used to describe a play with music—a play just employing music. In the 19th century, the word "melodrama" or "melodramatic" is commonly used to describe a play which used music to heighten the emotional tension and reinforce the moral judgments portrayed by the action. In this manner, it is used to characterize any kind of writing which relies on sensational happenings, violent action, and improbable events. This usage is based on the development of **melodrama** as a minor genre in the 19th century, when London's popular theatres—to revive the Classical theatre—put on plays with musical accompaniment. These plays were naively sensational, with simple, flat characterization, vicious villains plotting to trap virtuous maidens, and much bloodthirsty action, including horrible murders, ghosts and the like. More recently, the term has been applied to works utilizing strong contrasts between good and evil. Such 19th century well-known plays as *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *Ten Nights in a Bar-room* are characteristic of the popular melodramas of the age.

Metadrama/Metatheatre

Simply defined as drama about drama, the term is used to denote the plays which are obsessed with theatre discussions and which, therefore, comment on the relationship between the theatre and life. Of the devices of **metadrama** the play-within-the-play is

the most prominent. Playwrights appeal to such a device for different ends. The most obvious example is Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, which shows an extraordinary dramatization of the playwright's relationship with the creatures of his own imagination. Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* uses the play-within-the-play to accentuate the difference between life and death, appearance and reality and to therefore imply that we are fated rather than having free will. His *The Real Inspector Hound* uses the same device to spoof the English whodunnit and self-interested critics. The device of the inner play goes back to Shakespeare in his plays *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, which uses the device as a means of verification. Many other conventions, in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, such as the aside and soliloquy are of the devices used by **metadrama**. Such a technique has become prominent in modern and contemporary theatre. Bean's *England People* is a very good example of this, for it not only includes a play-within-the-play but also has much to say about the theatre, its nature and relation to reality.

Miracle Play

In English, the term generally refers to the medieval religious drama which dramatized saints' lives and divine miracles as well as stories from the Scriptures. Sometimes the term **mystery play**, as it was used in France, is employed to designate those plays containing Biblical stories, as distinct from those about the lives of the saints. English medieval writers referred to all these plays as "Corpus Christi plays," "pageants," and occasionally "miracle plays."

Modernism

It is a European and American literary and artistic movement that arose and flourished during the first half of the 20th century. **Modernism** can be understood as in large part an avant-garde reaction to mass culture and to middle-class Victorian values and tastes. Its techniques and aesthetic principles are illustrated in the works of Picasso, Stravinsky, Klee, Proust, Joyce, Eliot, Faulkner, and others.

Morality Play

The term refers to a form of late medieval and Renaissance drama containing allegorical figures who are frequently involved in the struggle over a man's soul. The term morality play was not used at that time; the terms moral, pithy, or goodly Interlude referred to this type of theatrical presentation. The most notable morality play is *Everyman* (early 16th century), which, instead of the vices and virtues, contains the characters of God, Death, Good Deeds, *etc.*, who are concerned with the future of Everyman's soul.

Multiculturalism

According to Bhikhu Parekh, "a multicultural society" is "one that includes two or more cultural communities" (6). Elizabeth Buettner argues that "multiculturalism refers to a succession of conscious efforts to make sense of, and manage, ethnically diverse communities at the local and national levels" (868). She emphasizes that "an everyday multiculturalism involv[es] differing degrees of social proximity and types of interaction (or lack thereof) with those seen as "other" (869). To Tariq Modood, multiculturalism is "a mode of integration" which "represents heterogeneity as opposed to homogeneity, diversity as a counterpoint to unity" (*Post-Immigration* 39). In Theissl's words, it "stands for the multiplicity of nationalities in one single place" (73). In his interview with John Nathan, Bean argues that there are two models of multiculturalism. The first model, which he calls "ephemeral," refers to that which

“enriched the culture of this country” like music, food, and clothing. The second, which he calls “genuine multiculturalism,” refers to the “little cantons” where “you can beat your kids or your wife if you come from a culture where corporal punishment is still allowed.” (See Sirwah's "Multiculturalism Satirized in Richard Bean's *England People Very Nice*" in *Studies on Contemporary Theatre* (2019)).

Mummer's Play

The term refers to an English folk play, performed mostly in rhyme and often with songs or even dances, that depicts the death and resurrection of a folk hero. (A **mummer** is an actor.) These plays grew up in Medieval times (or even earlier), and many historians believe that this drama is a celebration of the death of the year and its resurrection in the spring. Key characters include a regional hero such as Saint George, a comical quack doctor, adversaries, and a variable number of extras whose main purpose is to ask the audience for money, food, and drink at the end of the performance.

Mystery Play

As used in France, the term refers to the medieval religious plays which dramatized stories from the Scriptures. Christ's passion, the fall of man, and the story of Noah were some of the subjects used by playwrights. In England, the terms miracle play and mystery play were used interchangeably.

Monodrama

It is a dramatic piece composed for one act only, playing one character.

Naturalism

It is a style of drama that developed in the late 19th century as an attempt to represent real life on stage faithfully and without artifice; the actions of characters tend to be dominated by determinism (societal or environmental forces). Chekhov, Ibsen, and August Strindberg are all known for their naturalistic dramas.

Neo-Classicism

The term refers to the revival of the style and attitudes of classical literature. In English literature, the term designates the theories and practices of most writers from the latter part of the seventeenth century through the eighteenth. Though Neoclassic writers such as Dryden and Pope are different in practice as well as temperament, some general principles underlying **Neoclassicism**—such as reason, clarity of thought, realism, and adherence to literary tradition—can be distinguished in their work, and of course in that of their contemporaries.

Objective Correlative

The term is first used by T. S. Eliot in his essay “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919). He writes that “the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects; a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the general facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.” Regarding *Hamlet* as an artistic failure, Eliot argues that the emotions dominating Hamlet are in excess of the chain of events which he experiences.

One-act Play

The term refers to the unified dramatic work—composed of only one act—written since the late 19th century. Such major modern dramatists as Shaw, Beckett, and Pinter have written notable one-act plays.

Overview

An **overview** can sometimes be used as a synonym for “summary,” but usually it specifically means a summary of a number of documents or articles or other sources giving a relatively concise description or assessment of a *field of inquiry*. It could combine language from the sources themselves with paraphrasing. An example of a group writing an **overview** might be a governmental body—an executive advisory council or a committee in a legislature.

Pantomime

The terms refers to the art of acting without speech, by means of gestures, facial expression and bodily movement. It is often exaggerated and comic to be significant.

Paraphrase

It is a restatement of speech or writing that retains the basic meaning while changing the words. A **paraphrase** often clarifies the original statement by putting it into words that are more easily understood. **Paraphrasing** is especially useful when dealing with poetry, since poetic language is often difficult and poems may have meanings that are hard to pin down.

Parody

Parody is a satiric imitation of a literary work, exaggerating its style and content, and playing especially on the original. A **parody** can be amusing and mocking in tone. Thus, Stoppard’s *The Real Inspector Hound* parodies the predictability and hackneyed mechanism of the English whodunnit by mocking Agatha Christie’s *The Mousetrap*, one of the most celebrated of all whodunnits. The term *pastiche* is a synonym for **parody**; in French, it refers to an imitation of a literary work or style, often to ridicule it. **Travesty** is the mockery of a subject or specific work by treating it in an absurdly low style. Stoppard’s *Travesties* is a travesty of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Persona

It is a Latin word meaning the mask worn by the actors of the ancient Classical theatre. In modern literary usage, it is the character or “mask” created by the actual author to tell the story, and, hence, to distance himself from what is said or told. Such personae are the imagined historical figure of the speaker (the murderous duke) in Robert Browning’s dramatic monologue “My Last Duchess,” Prufrock in T. S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” or the narrator Marlow in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Though the *persona* is a mask assumed by the poet/novelist to speak to his audience/readers, one is not likely to expect that the duke is Browning himself, that Prufrock is Eliot, or Marlow Conrad. **Persona** is the singular of *personae*.

Picaresque

It is a work that depicts, in episodes, the adventures or the life story of a rogue/knave. Usually, he is a social parasite or a person of low estate who manages to exploit those

in more elevated positions. A vehicle for satire, the **picaresque** is generally presented in the first person.

Plagiarism

The term refers to the act of using someone else's ideas, words, or thoughts as your own, without giving credit to the other person. When you give credit to the original author (by giving the person's name, name of the article, and where it was posted or printed), you are citing the source. There is, of course, a difference between plagiarism and adaptation.

Play-within-the-play

It is a dramatic technique/device in which an additional play (whether a recycling of an older play or a new invented one) is performed during the performance of the main one.

Agnes Sophie Bauer defines it as

a structure that can be visualized geometrically as concentric circle(s) or field(s) within field(s), thus underlining the break in the dramatic continuum of all the plays involved. Simply said, a play must be embedded in another play, thus creating two different levels of fictionality. These two planes must be autonomous yet the real spectator should never be allowed to forget that there are two levels of fictionality. This duplicity is marked by the duplication of the aesthetic gaze: the real spectators watch a play in which fictional or 'supposed' spectators watch a play. (32-4)

As a "specific dramaturgical phenomenon" (Giovanzana 13), "the play within the play is defined as a manifestation of *theatrum mundi* (during the baroque period) and as a tool for self-reflexivity (nowadays)" (136). This device "has proven very effective as it has been successfully employed in many plays. Its use, although frequently dictated by technical considerations, may actually be considered to be related to a familiar psychological mechanism seen in dream work, namely, a dream within a dream" (Grinstein 147). The play-within-the-play is utilised by many playwrights for different purposes. It can be employed for verifying a crime/criminal and hence supporting the theme of the main play as in both Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; in the former where Hieronimo and Belimperia get their victim and in the latter where Hamlet "catch[es] the conscience of the King" (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* II. ii. 601). It can be embedded as an entertainment for a wedding as in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It can be employed for narrowing or closing the gap between reality and fiction as in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by the Italian Luigi Pirandello who "uses the theatrical event to point out the theatricality of everyday life [and] uses theatre to show the 'reality' of fiction" (Giovanzana 35). In other words, he utilises the play within for making theatre a tool to understand reality. It can be further employed by the playwright to satirize the immigration history of some nations as in Richard Bean's *England People Very Nice* (2009). Here in Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound*, the play-within-the-play is utilised for a different purpose. (For a full documentation of the critics mentioned here see Sirwah's "The Play-within-the-Play Parody in T. Stoppard's *Hound*" in *Studies on Contemporary Theatre* (2019)).

Plot

The **plot** is the organization of events and incidents that occur in a play or narrative, or the sequence in which the author arranges events in a story. E. M. Forster defines it as "a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality." According to Aristotle's

Poetics, a **unified plot** has a beginning (that is not preceded by anything), a middle (that is both preceded by something before it and leading to something after it), and an end (that is based on something before it but not followed by anything after it). The **traditional plot** should include the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the resolution.

The **plot** has a protagonist who is struggling against an antagonist, creating the conflict. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, for example, after the **exposition**, the incidents involving Iago's deception of Othello lead to a **crisis**, the point at which the Moor decides to kill Desdemona. The conflicts of the play now intensified and heightened, the action moves toward the **climax**, the murder of Desdemona. Following this incident, the denouement contains the discovery of Iago's treachery, Othello's remorse and suicide, along with Iago's capture and condemnation to torture. In this plot pattern, the events preceding the climax are called the **rising action**, those following the **falling action**. Because the major climax of *Othello* comes late in the play, the falling action and the denouement are here the same, but in a play like *Hamlet*, where the climax—the confirmation in the Mousetrap scene that Claudius is the murderer—comes comparatively early, there is an extended falling action, with the denouement at the end.

The **plot** may include a flashback or subplot, which, in one way or another, mirrors the main plot. For example, in *King Lear*, the relationship between the Earl of Gloucester and his sons mirrors the relationship between King Lear and his daughters. Though many works do not follow this pattern, these terms remain useful in the discussion of the drama and of other genres as well.

Poetic Justice

The term is used to designate the idea that the good are rewarded and the evil punished. The use of **poetic justice** underlines the moral function as primary in literature.

Portable Theatre Company

The term refers to a group of thespians in the late 1960's and early 1970's who meant to open the eyes of the British people to what was wrong in their contemporary world.

Poststructuralism

Difficult to be crystallized by definition, **poststructuralism** is differently viewed by critics. To Catherine Belsey, it "names a theory, or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (5). She later argues that "[p]oststructuralism is not a system, nor even... a unified body of theory. ... Its key word is difference" (56). James Williams refers to it as "*a heavily historical movement reacting to a long series of philosophical ideas. It is also, though, a revolutionary way of thinking about history*" (7). Another critic refers to it as a movement in social sciences that came as "a result of both the structuralist period of examining sign and structure, and the humanist paradigm of concentrating on the texts, the writers, the readers, and histories" (Gnanasekaran 212). In her Foucault-based article "Feminist Post-Structuralism," Carmen Luke argues that **poststructuralism** "is both a social theory and a methodology. Like all theories, it has many interpretations and derivations, one of which is feminist post-structuralism" (187). Thus, **poststructuralism** may be generally regarded as a philosophical movement that has come at the end of the 20th century as a consummation of, and a reaction to, structuralism, an intellectual movement in France in the 1950's and the 1960's that studied the underlying structures in cultural products and used analytical concepts from linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and other fields to interpret those

structures. **Poststructuralism** has come with such leading figures as Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes to see the collective works of literature as an interconnected network of derived meanings.

Unlike structuralists' traditional view which regarded the structure/text as a closed static system having one single deterministic interpretation, poststructuralists look at it as dynamic and open for multiple and diverse interpretations. In other words, in our reading of a text, traditional criticism asks us to appeal to the author and to what he did mean at the particular moment; and if the latter is dead, one is expected to read biographies, diaries, or letters until one can guess what the author might have intended (Belsey 18). Thus, **poststructuralism** critiques the modernist/humanist conception of language that assumes that the latter is an obvious "window to the real, that meaning is fixed in the linguistic signifier, and that the rational, self-conscious, and self-knowing subject has autonomous control and choice over 'authentic' self-expression through language" (Luke 189-90). Therefore, poststructuralists deny the distinction between signifier and signified (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 80) and, for them, signifiers or words derive meanings from one another infinitely, simply because every *signified* is becoming a new *signifier* in a continuing process. Dominik Finkelde elucidates:

Signifiers cannot exist in isolation but rather are dependent on a system within which they must be deciphered. Meaning thus proves to be eccentric, for it cannot be determined once and for all in any one epistemology.... For Derrida, the meaning of any given expression can never remain identical with itself, and each new dialectical cognitive process presents itself as an ever-postponed fulfillment to come. (1246)

This leads to Derrida, the father of deconstruction, who, challenging the logocentrist structure and Saussure's binary oppositions, claims that there could be no universal source of logic and meaning because the centre or subject of a structure is always changing. Hence, he is fascinated by the "stated abandonment of all reference to a *center*, to a *subject*, to a privileged *reference*, to an origin, or to an absolute *arché*.... The absence of a center is here the absence of a subject and the absence of an author" ("Structure, Sign, ...," 7-8). Thus, poststructuralism regards the meaning as contextual since it is affected by related words and it thus has a historical view, unlike structuralism which has a descriptive one based on an author's intended meaning. Thus, if the structural analysis of a text is synchronic (interested in the author), the poststructuralist one is diachronic (resting on its context and history).

Barthes too argues that critics should abstain from analyzing the author's intention; "it is language which speaks, not the author...language alone acts, 'performs,' and not 'oneself'... linguistically, the author is never anything more than the man who writes, just as I is no more than the man who says I" (3). This presupposes that the author may not quite understand what he/she is trying to say and the only true human-literature relationship is that one between the text and the reader. He argues that "the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination" (6). Hence, poststructuralism is received by some scholars as the Birth of the Reader. As Barthes argues, "to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author" (6). Given this, poststructuralists reject the notion of a single truth or meaning for more than one reason. First, the two readers of a text can never be alike: each one has one's own life experience to the text in question and hence will have one's own interpretation of the words and themes. Second, since literary works traditionally draw upon one another and share

techniques and subject matters, it is impossible for a work of art to be self-sufficient or even to reach full closure. This fact is emphasized by such critics as Judith Baxter who argues that according to the poststructuralist theory, a "text can never express a single, obvious meaning; it always says more than the author means to say. Rather than drawing on a unified source of meaning, texts unintentionally let many voices speak, which means that interpreting discourses is often a finely judged process" (44).

The poststructuralists' stance against a single meaning has to do with both Derrida's word "*differance*" and history. *Differance*, which is "neither a word nor a concept," means both "difference" and "deferment" (*Of Grammatology* 37). (For a full documentation of the references referred to here, see Sirwah's "The Unbridgeable Divide between Black and White America in David Mamet's *Race*: A Poststructuralist Study" in *Studies on Contemporary Theatre* (2019)).

Postmodernism

Seen as a break from 19th century realism and a reaction against modernism, **postmodernism** as a current cultural phenomenon is not a trend to be chronologically defined nor is it an organized movement with certain leaders/figures. Linda Hutcheon starts her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) by arguing that "postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (3, 118). She defines the term *postmodernism* by quoting Charles Russell: "an art of criticism, with no message other than the need for continuous questioning. It is an art of unrest, with no clearly defined audience other than those predisposed to doubt and to search" (42). After stressing that "postmodernism remains fundamentally contradictory, offering only questions, never final answers (42), Hutcheon, influenced by Alan Wilde, opts to define it as "anarchic, in complicity with chaos, accepting of uncertainty and confusion" (50). She accentuates, throughout her *Poetics*, that it "is a fundamentally contradictory enterprise: its art forms (and its theory) at once use and abuse, install and then destabilize convention in parodic ways, self-consciously pointing both to their own inherent paradoxes and provisionally and, of course, to their critical or ironic re-reading of the art of the past" (23). Hutcheon concludes her book by arguing that "postmodernism may well be...the expression of a culture in crisis" (230). She repeats the same lines once again in her article "The Politics of Postmodernism" (80)—which accentuates such lines as characterizing the phenomenon.

To Lee Patterson, "postmodernism is a culture in process and in dispute: history has returned, but it remains in danger of disappearance within the play of differences" (Patterson 90). Used interchangeably with "postdramatic" theatre, "postmodern theatre," as Hans-Thies Lehmann argues, has been characterized with a long and impressive list of features" characteristic of international postmodernism:

ambiguity; celebrating art as fiction; celebrating theatre as process; discontinuity; heterogeneity; non-textuality; pluralism; multiple codes; subversion; all sites; perversion; performer as theme and protagonist; deformation; text as basic material only; deconstruction; considering text to be authoritarian and archaic; performance as a third term between drama and theatre; anti-mimetic; resisting interpretation. (25)

Lehmann goes further to stress that the "postmodern theatre" is "without discourse" and resists (historiographic) interpretation (25). In fact, postmodernism has many characteristic features/techniques, most prominent of them are intertextuality, irony, historiographic metafiction, and hyperreality. (For a full documentation of the

references referred to here, see Sirwah's "Multiculturalism satirized in Richard Bean's *England People Very Nice*" in *Studies on Contemporary Theatre* (2019)).

Précis

A French word literally meaning “to cut short,” ***précis*** is a concise summary of an article or other work. It is not an essay or re-writing. It should not tell but summarize a core essence of the original document and provide readers with the information about its significance and worth. The ***précis*** is put in one’s own words, that is, it is paraphrased.

Problem Play

A less plot-driven, more character-based format, where characters engage in discussions, the **problem play** refers to a play of ideas that explores contemporary social problems. For example, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* are good examples for the problem play. Many of Shakespeare's comedies are termed as problem plays because of their confusing tone and ambiguous endings. The **problem play** is referred to as a child of the **well-made play** wherein discussions serve as the action of the play.

Pseudo-

A term that comes as a prefix to any movement—Classicism, Naturalism, Shakespearean, *etc.*—to indicate that such a movement is falsely attributed to an author, period, school, *etc.* The author, period, or school may be having some characteristics of that movement but not in essence belonging to it.

Prologue

The speech given to the audience by an actor before the start of the play.

Protagonist

It is the main character in a literary work. In Greek drama, the **protagonist** is the first actor who plays the leading part. Today, used synonymously with the term “hero,” **protagonist** refers to the most important character in a play or story. However, in achieving his/her objective, the **protagonist** is often hindered by some opposing force. This opposing force is human, animal, or natural. If it is natural, *i.e.*, character, this character will be referred to as **antagonist**. In Stoppard’s *Jumpers*, for example, Archie Jumper is the antagonist of the play’s protagonist, George Moore.

Realism

It is an attempt in theatre to represent everyday life and people as they are or appear to be through careful attention to detail in character motivation, costume, setting, and dialogue. Plays from this period (from 1820 to 1920) seek the truth, find beauty in the commonplace, and focus on the conditions of the working class. Ibsen is an exemplar of the movement; he influenced others such as George Bernard Shaw and Anton Chekov.

Resolution

Used synonymously with the “falling action,” **resolution** means the events following the climax of a play or narrative.

Romance

In the strictest academic terms, a **romance** is a narrative genre in literature that involves a mysterious, adventurous, or spiritual story line where the focus is on a quest that involves bravery and strong values, not a love interest. However, modern definitions of **romance** also include stories that have a relationship issue as the main focus.

Romanticism

In the first lecture of his *Romanticism*, Lascelles Abercrombie says that the word “romantic” is “first used to mark certain qualities of landscape capable of somehow suggesting the setting or mood of the medieval ‘romances.’” That is to say, the word “romantic” comes to be associated with another group of ideas, such as ‘magic,’ ‘suggestive,’ ‘nostalgic.’ In 1837, John Stuart Mill explained that the “insurrection against the old traditions of classicism was called **romanticism**” in France. To Albert Beguin, **Romanticism** is “a myth: man invents myths to overcome his solitude.” So, the ‘whys’ of the romantics that arose mostly from the heart could not find their answer in logic. Thus, Abercrombie seems to summarize the meaning of romanticism when he says: “It is the evocation of the past, it is the dissolution of form, it is the individual fighting against tradition, it is a hundred and one things.” When we state that Classicism rests on certain characteristics such as reason, order, realism, tradition,... *etc.*, this implies that **Romanticism** rests on the very opposite characteristics, *i.e.*, emotion, disorder, imagination, wonder,...*etc.*

Satire

It is the use of mockery, irony, or wit to attack or ridicule something—an idea, institution, an actual person or a type of person, or even mankind in general—to lower it in the reader’s eyes and make it laughable. For example, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* is an outstanding example of **satire**. Another example can be seen in Richard Bean’s *England People Very Nice*, which satirizes the different customs of the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims.

Scenario

Defined as a summary, sketch, or outline of a story, a **scenario** does not specify everything that happens, just enough for a reader to have an idea of what is intended. A **scenario** is typically used to present an idea for a production for which the author is seeking funding.

Screenplay

A **screenplay** is a script that has scene directions and acting instructions so the actor’s acting is more convincing.

Script

A written text that includes the details of how the play/movie/scene is going to go, the **script** is a written test for each character. So, when they are learning their lines, they can use the script to help them. In other words, it is a full specification of dialogue and action for a stage play or movie (when the **script** is intended for a movie it is usually called a **screenplay**), or any other medium;

Setting

It refers to the background against which the action of a play or story occurs. The elements making up a **setting** are: the geographical location, its topography, scenery,

and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room; the occupations and daily manner of living of the characters; the time/period in which the action occurs (for example, an epoch in history or a season of the year); and the general environment of the characters (for example, religious, mental, moral, social, and emotional conditions).

In novels and short stories, the **setting**—the time and place in which the characters are created—may be crucially significant, for writers may use it to convey information about the mood or temperament of the characters themselves. The **setting** has much to do for analyzing the play putting it in its right context.

Soliloquy

It is a fascinating dramatic convention which allows a character, alone onstage, to speak directly to the audience, as if thinking aloud, to express his thoughts, feelings, and decisions. A **soliloquy** provides us with much accurate information about the character since he is by himself and what he says is presumed to be true. Hamlet's "To be or not to be," the most famous **soliloquy** in all literatures, reveals his private emotions. A **soliloquy** may also give information directly to the audience and display characters, as does Richard III's opening speech, "Now is the winter of our discontent." Although the playwrights of the Elizabethan theatre used the **soliloquy** regularly and brought it to its expressive height, the modern theatre made little use of this dramatic device.

Stage Directions

The term refers to the directions/information—not part of the dialogue of a play—given to the actor, director, or reader in the script about how the playwright intends actions or arrangements to be carried out. They are often written in italics. This information may be a description of an action or setting. Furthermore, the writer may describe a character or analyse his personality. However, **stage directions** range from such short instructions about the entrances and exits of characters as "*Exit, followed by the courtiers*"—well known in early plays—to the lengthy elucidations modern writers inserted in their plays. Many modern writers, like Shaw and Stoppard, give elaborate stage directions that may be significant in interpreting the play.

Structure

The term refers to the inherent relationships among the elements of a work of art. The term usually refers to the organization of elements other than words.

Subjective

The term **subjective** and its opposite "objective" are loosely applied to both literary works and literary criticism. However, **subjective** is applied to literary works in either of two senses. (a) It may mean that the work in question is in some manner autobiographical—that its events conform to the writer's actual experience. (b) It may mean that the story narrated by the first person—particularly in a narrative—may be seen and hence narrated from narrator's own perspective. The term can be further applied to literary criticism in that one can interpret a literary work from one's own perspective that might not be fair and square.

Summary

A **summary** is a record in a reader's own words that gives the main points of a piece of writing such as a newspaper article, the chapter of a book, or even a whole book. It is

also possible to summarize something that you have heard, such as a lecture, or something that you have seen and heard, such as a movie.

Symbolism

The term refers to the use of specific objects or images to represent abstract ideas. It is commonly misused, describing any and all representational relationships, which in fact are more often metaphorical than symbolic. A **symbol** must be something tangible or visible, while the idea it symbolizes must be something abstract or universal. For example, in his *England People Very Nice*, Richard Bean uses symbols such as the synagogue, the cross, and the crescent to refer to the religion embraced by different migrants throughout the play.

Synopsis

A **synopsis** is a brief outline, abstract, summary or general overview of an article, essay, story, book or other paper work. It is an in-depth summary of a written work that describes the content of that work from beginning to end. So, one usually speaks of a synopsis of a novel/film/play.

Theme

The term is used to indicate the subject matter, central idea or thesis of a work of art. A **theme** may be stated explicitly (directly) or implicitly (indirectly). If it is not explicitly stated, it can be abstracted from the work. A text may contain several themes. For example, *King Lear* reveals many themes: rashness, evil, nature, appearance, reality, kinship, ingratitude, selfishness, and so on.

Thesis Play

The term refers to a drama which illustrates a social problem, with the dramatist's solution. It is not so specific in its programme as a propaganda play. Examples of **thesis** plays can be seen in such early plays of Shaw as *Widowers' Houses* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. The two terms **problem play** and **propaganda play** characterize plays of this type, though the latter term suggests more militant works such as Odets's *Waiting for Lefty*.

Thriller

It is a **genre** of literature, film, and television whose primary feature is that it induces strong feelings of excitement, anxiety, tension, suspense, fear, and other similar emotions in its readers/viewers—in other words, media that thrills the audience.

Tone

Critics use the term *attitude* to refer to the author's relationship to his material or to his audience—or both. These attitudes, as they appear in the work rather than stated, constitute or determine its **tone**. A speaker indicates **tone** by changes in voice and manner, but a writer must rely on the verbal devices at his command.

Tragedy

The word "tragedy" (from the Greek *tragoidia*) literally means "goat song." Aristotle defines **tragedy** as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, having magnitude, complete in itself." It is presented in dramatic, not narrative, form. Of the ingredients of tragedy is the **tragic hero** who must have certain qualities: he must be good, a person of high stature, who is neither villainous nor exceptionally virtuous; he

must be true to life, *i.e.*, realistic; he must be consistent throughout the play; and he must be ideal or of a noble origin. The tragic hero moves from happiness to misery through some frailty/error called **hamartia**. (Oedipus, for example, kills his father because of his own rashness, and marries his mother because of his ignorance.) This Greek term, *hamartia*, is sometimes translated as “**tragic flaw**.” Though the hero’s *hamartia* is known as **hubris** (*hybris*)—the expressive pride and self-confidence inundating him—it is also referred to as a mistake in judgement. However, this *hamartia* moves the plot to a **peripety** (*peripeteia*), a sudden reversal of the hero’s fortune from good to bad. At this point, as Aristotle suggests in his *Poetics*, there should occur the **anagnorsis**, “**disclosure**” of the circumstances, or “**recognition**” of the hero’s true self or nature. Finally, the tragic action through pity and fear effects a “purgation of these emotions.” The meaning of this purgation, or **catharsis**, has generated considerable debate. Anyway, Aristotle seems to be employing this term, *catharsis*, as a medical metaphor, a cleansing process due to the emotions of pity for the tragic hero and fear/terror of his tragic end. It is not strange, however, that modern or contemporary tragedies do not include many of these (tragedy) ingredients as depicted by Aristotle; Aristotle’s *Poetics*—the first and greatest work in literary criticism—is nothing more than a reflection of the tragedies contemporary with him, such as those of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Tragic Flaw

Referred to as *hamartia* by Aristotle, **tragic flaw** is the defect or weak point in the tragic hero/heroine that leads to his/her downfall. For example, Othello’s tragic flaw is over-jealousy, Macbeth’s is over-ambition, and King Lear’s is rashness and folly. It is not a must for all tragic heroes to have tragic flaws. Hamlet, for instance, does not have a **tragic flaw** in the full sense of the word; he is just “thinking too much of the event,” which shows him as a conscientious man, nothing more.

Tragic Hero

The term means the central figure in a tragedy; typically, a **tragic hero** is a person of basically good character who passes from happiness to misery because of a character flaw or error in judgment referred to above as tragic flaw. For example, Hamlet is the tragic hero of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

Tragicomedy

As the word implies, **tragicomedy** is a mixture of tragedy and comedy. It is a play in which the action, though apparently leading to a catastrophe, is reversed to bring about a happy ending. The term is frequently associated with the plays of John Fletcher who, in his preface to *The Faithful Shepherdess*, defines it: “A tragicomedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy.” The term may be used to characterize several of Shakespeare’s plays, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, in which a tragic end is unexpectedly avoided, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter’s Tale*. Various modern plays, such as Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* or Chechov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, may also be classified as tragicomedies, though the tragedy and the comedy may be blended throughout the play, rather than existing as separable strands in the plot.

Unities

The three “dramatic unities” are action, time, and place. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle said that a play should be the imitation of a single action, the parts of which are to be so arranged that if any of them were removed, or shifted, the whole would suffer. He also said that the action of tragedy was limited to a day. The unity of place—not, in fact, mentioned by Aristotle—limits the scene to just one place or city.

Whereas the Italian and French critics of the Renaissance made of the **unities** strict laws that a dramatist must adhere to, English dramatists did not usually observe them. However, some writers follow the **unities** for dramatic intensity. An example of a modern play composed strictly according to the **unities** is Tennessee Williams’s *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Villain

The term refers to the bad guy, the one who comes up with diabolical plots to somehow cause harm or ruin. It is one of the archetype characters in many stories. The **villain** may truly believe that he/she is helping society, but causes harm in the process. In the old days, the **villain** (usually a man) would somehow be harming the damsel-in-distress (helpless female), who needed the hero (the strong he-man) to save her. Nowadays, we are seeing more women as villains and heroes, and the damsel-in-distress may be a man or a community. A female **villain** is sometimes called a **villainess**. However, the archetype characteristics remain the same, only the gender changes. The **villain** usually is the **antagonist**, the character who tends to have a negative effect on other characters. In Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, for example, Edmund’s desire to use any means possible to secure his own needs makes him appear as a villain without a conscience. A real life example of the ultimate tyrant and fanatic **villain** is Hitler, the leader of Germany in the 1940’s. His goal of ruling the world and creating a pure race was part of his insanity and feelings of persecution due to a tragic young life.

Well-made Play

A dramatic genre from 19th-century theatre first codified by the French dramatist Eugene Scribe, the **well-made play** is characterized by tight plots and plot twists that are often caused by secrets or the timely arrivals of surprise letters, papers, or characters. Henrik Ibsen and the other realistic dramatists of the later 19th century (August Strindberg, Gerhart Hauptmann, Emile Zola, Anton Chekhov) built upon its technique of careful construction and preparation of effects in the genre **problem play**.

Word Play

The term refers to verbal fencing, punning, or mock bickering. Shakespeare’s plays are known for their word play.

Workshop

The term refers to a place for putting together and polishing a play. A **workshop production** is a work in progress. **To workshop a play** is to prepare it for performance and present it to a select group of advisers who suggest changes, adjustments, and improvements.

Back of The Throat

by
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Cast

Khaled

Bartlett

Carl

Asfoor

Shelly

Beth

Jean

(Note: One actor can play the parts of Shelly, Beth and Jean)

Khaled's studio. Futon on floor.
Assorted objects, furniture. BARTLETT
stands opposite KHALED. CARL is flipping
through a book. He will continue to
methodically inspect other books,
papers, as well as clothes.

BARTLETT

We appreciate this.

KHALED

Whatever you need, please.

BARTLETT

This is informal, so - .

KHALED

I understand.

BARTLETT

Casual. As casual as a visit like this can be.

KHALED

Either way. Make it formal if you want. I want to help. I've
been looking for a way to help.

BARTLETT

Thanks.

KHALED

Horrible.

BARTLETT

Yes.

KHALED

Horrible.

BARTLETT

Nice space.

KHALED

Yes. - A little claustrophobic. But it's cheap.

BARTLETT

Live simply they say.

KHALED

I'd live extravagantly if I could afford it.

BARTLETT

What's this say?

(Bartlett picks up a picture frame from a table.)

KHALED

A present from my mother....It says, er, "God".

BARTLETT

"God"?

KHALED

Yes.

BARTLETT

It's pretty.

KHALED

It is....I'm not religious myself.

BARTLETT

I've always been impressed with this...(makes a motion over the writing with his finger.)

KHALED

Calligraphy?

BARTLETT

Very artistic. Why the emphasis on - calligraphy? I see it all the time.

KHALED

Well - frankly - I'm not sure its - . I know in general that, the religion tends to favor abstraction to, er, human representation. The idea being to avoid worship, or, too much distraction with the, um, human form....In truth I don't know a whole lot about it.

BARTLETT

No television?

KHALED

No. Too addictive. It's easier to remove the temptation.

BARTLETT

(picking up a book)

You didn't see the images?

KHALED

Oh yes. God, yes. How could I not. I wish I hadn't.

(The tinkling of a tune is heard. Khaled and Bartlett turn in the direction of Carl, who is standing holding a music box.)

(A beat as they all stand and listen to the tune.)

CARL

"Oklahoma"?

KHALED

I've never been able to identify the tune.

BARTLETT

(referring to the book)

And what's this about?

(Carl closes the music box and places it next to another object he's selected. He resumes his search.)

KHALED

It's the, um - Koran.

BARTLETT

Huh. So this is it.

KHALED

Another present from my mother. Her idea of a subtle hint.

BARTLETT

(flips through book)

You're not religious, you say?

KHALED

No. She is.

BARTLETT

Didn't rub off.

KHALED

Unfortunately not.

BARTLETT

Why "unfortunately"?

KHALED

Well - because I hear it's a comfort.

BARTLETT

And if you had to sum up the message of this book in a couple of lines.

KHALED

Er. The usual. Be good. Or else.

BARTLETT

Sounds like good advice to me. How come you're not religious?

(Khaled looks over at what Carl is rifling through.)

KHALED

I was never comfortable with the "or else" part.

BARTLETT

Nobody likes the punishment part.

KHALED

I'd like to think God isn't as small-minded as we are.

BARTLETT

I guess the point is there are consequences for our actions. Funny, huh. How a book can have such an impact.

KHALED

Yes. I was just reading about Martin Luther and the Reformation and how the whole -

BARTLETT

(interrupting)

Am I pronouncing that correctly? "Kaled"?

KHALED

Close enough. (To Carl) Is there anything in particular you're looking for?

BARTLETT

Don't mind him. He's just going to do his thing.

KHALED

But if there's anything -

BARTLETT

(interrupting)

With your permission, if we still have that.

KHALED

Go ahead, but if there's something -

BARTLETT

(interrupting)

"Kaled"?

KHALED

Er, Khaled.

BARTLETT

"Haled"?

KHALED

More Khaled.

"Kaled".
BARTLETT

That's good.
KHALED

But not exactly.
BARTLETT

It doesn't matter.
KHALED

Khaled.
CARL

That's it.
KHALED

It's that back of the throat thing.
BARTLETT

Right.
KHALED

Carl spent some time in the Mid-East.
BARTLETT

Oh yes?
KHALED

So how do you stay informed then? with no tv. Newspapers? the internet?
BARTLETT

Both.
KHALED

And when you want to kick back, you...?
BARTLETT

When I...?
KHALED
(not getting what he means)

How do you relax?
BARTLETT

Well...
KHALED

How do you spend your free time?
BARTLETT

KHALED

Really? - That's relevant?

(Bartlett stares at him)

Er, sure, okay. I read, mostly.

BARTLETT

Uh-huh.

KHALED

That's my big thing, reading.

BARTLETT

And when you want to amuse yourself, you do what?

KHALED

(referring to the books)

Actually I find that stuff amusing.

BARTLETT

(holding up a periodical)

This stuff?

KHALED

Some of it.

BARTLETT

(reading the cover)

"Wheat Production and the Politics of Hunger."?

KHALED

A real page turner.

BARTLETT

(pointing to the computer)

Can we look at that, by the way?

KHALED

It's kind of private.

(slight beat)

It's - kind of private.

(Carl and Bartlett are
looking at Khaled)

Will you be taking it away?

BARTLETT

I doubt we'll need to look at it.

KHALED

If you want to.

BARTLETT

I'm actually more curious about how you kick back. What you do when you want to relax. Break your routine. Spice things up.

KHALED

Can I ask how that helps you? Knowing how I amuse myself?

BARTLETT

The questions will seem a little intrusive, unfortunately. There's no avoiding that.

KHALED

I understand. I just don't have that exciting a life. Did I mention I'm a citizen, by the way. I can show you my -

(Carl holds up Khaled's passport.)

Right. Just so you know.

(Carl puts it among two or three other items. This pile will gradually grow.)

BARTLETT

Here's the thing. We know you're bending over backwards and I sense we're going to be out of your way shortly.

CARL

Be done in five.

BARTLETT

And we know you didn't have to let us do this.

KHALED

Are you looking for anything in particular? Maybe I can just point you to it.

BARTLETT

He's just going to poke around. It's a random thing.

KHALED

Are you sure? The strange thing is I was going to call you. A friend of mine said he would, which made me think I should too.

BARTLETT

Who?

KHALED

Er - a friend?

BARTLETT

Right; and that friend's name?

KHALED

(hesitates)

Hisham. He wouldn't mind me telling you.

BARTLETT

Hisham what?

KHALED

Darmush. He was thinking of calling you too.

BARTLETT

I look forward to hearing from him.

KHALED

I thought maybe I should just to let you know I'm - here, you know. I am who I am and - just so you're not wondering - in case my name comes across your desk which it obviously has. I wish you'd tell me who gave you my name.

BARTLETT

Also know that anything you say here will be held in strict confidence.

KHALED

(continuing)

Because then maybe I could address the concerns head on; so you don't waste your time. I imagine you're getting a lot of calls. People with scores to settle. Or skittish neighbors. Was it George? He seems a little too curious about where I'm from. He doesn't seem to understand my connections with my country of birth are long gone. Was it - Beth? We had a falling out. It's very strange not being able to address whatever accusations have been made against me. It's like battling ghosts.

BARTLETT

I didn't say anything about accusations.

KHALED

There haven't been?

(Bartlett stares at him;
slight beat)

Er, amuse myself? Let's see, I go to movies, I read. I like eating out; I sit in cafes. I like to go for long walks. I feel like I'm writing a personals ad. I wish there was more to tell. You'll leave here thinking, gee, what a lame life this guy leads.

BARTLETT

That's the other thing: If you have nothing to worry about than you have nothing to worry about. I know a visit from us can be unsettling. It's an awkward part of this job that when we come around people aren't necessarily happy to see us. We've held meetings to see if we can't fix that, but I guess there's no avoiding the fact that this is what it is. I'm a government official, uninvited, and you've been yanked out of your routine.

KHALED

You're more than welcome, I assure you.

BARTLETT

And we appreciate that.

KHALED

I've wanted to help.

BARTLETT

What I'm saying is we know we've put you on the spot.

KHALED

Well - .

BARTLETT

(continuing)

It would be natural to be ill at ease, regardless of whether you want us here or not.

KHALED

Sure.

BARTLETT

(continuing)

Don't waste time *trying* to appear innocent if you are. If you're innocent you're innocent. You don't have to work at it.

CARL

(turning around, to Khaled)

"Karafa".

KHALED

What?

BARTLETT

So relax.

KHALED

I'm trying.

BARTLETT

We're not here to get you for jay-walking. Don't worry about us finding small stuff. We all have small stuff we'd rather not have people see.

KHALED

Not even that. That's what I'm saying, I'm not even hiding any interesting, non-political stuff.

BARTLETT

Stuff like this.

(From under a pile of magazines, he picks out a porn magazine.)

Don't worry about this stuff.

KHALED

Okay. That.

BARTLETT
It's not a big deal.

KHALED
It's - sure.

BARTLETT
(flipping through magazine)
Not a huge one anyway.

KHALED
It's legal.

BARTLETT
It's porn. Not good. But it's still okay.

KHALED
They haven't outlawed it yet.

BARTLETT
No, but that doesn't make it all right.

KHALED
It's - it's a debate, but sure.

BARTLETT
A debate?

KHALED
Er, yeah.

BARTLETT
A debate how?

KHALED
About - you know - the place of erotica in society.

BARTLETT
Uh-huh....You think this is healthy?
(shows Khaled a picture)
With cows?

KHALED
I don't much care for the farm theme, no.

BARTLETT
You think this should have a place in society?

KHALED
It already does have a place in society.

BARTLETT
So does murder. Doesn't make it okay.

KHALED

I'm not sure I'd equate that with murder.

BARTLETT

You go for this stuff? On the kinky side?

KHALED

What's kinky? She's draped over a cow. It's actually meant to be an anti-leather kind of thing. If you read the blurb. A cow wearing a human. A reverse sort of - vegetarian's point of view of sex and fashion. It's a stretch. But someone in that magazine is obviously an animal rights person. Or is pretending to be for the sake of something different.

BARTLETT

The woman doesn't seem to fare too well.

KHALED

No, but - . What does this have to do with anything? It's one magazine?

(Carl holds up four or five more porn magazines.)

Yes. I'm allowed.

BARTLETT

Careful there. You don't want to get caught in little lies over nothing.

KHALED

What lie? I thought you didn't care about the small stuff.

BARTLETT

I don't. It's just a pet issue I have.

CARL

(to Khaled)

"Hany-hany."

KHALED

I'm sorry: am I supposed to understand that?

BARTLETT

You don't speak Arabic?

KHALED

No. That's why I didn't call. I knew you were looking for Arabic speakers.

(Carl holds up two books in Arabic.)

Yes. I keep telling myself I should learn it. Look, I hope you're not going to pick apart every little thing because I'm
(MORE)

KHALED (cont'd)
 sure you could come to all sorts of conclusions by what I have. As you would with anyone's home. Come to a bunch of false conclusions by what someone has. Which may mean nothing more than, you know, like a Rorschach test. Without taking anything away from your training; but still: a porn magazine; Arabic books? So what?

BARTLETT
 Uh-huh.

KHALED
 It's my business. - I don't have to apologize for it. Do I?

BARTLETT
 No, you don't. Or any of these titles.
 (Carl hands him a few of the books he selected)
 "Getting Your Government's Attention Through Unconventional Means", "A Manual for the Oppressed", "Theater of the Oppressed", "Covering Islam", "Militant Islam". (Holds up a little red book:) "Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung"?

KHALED
 I'd heard so much about it.

BARTLETT
 Do you feel that oppressed?

KHALED
 I was a lit major; I read everything.

BARTLETT
 And so on.
 (he throws the rest of the titles on the futon)
 It's not what we care about.

KHALED
 Good because on the face of it I know -

BARTLETT
 (interrupting)
 On the other hand a person is reflected by what he owns. It'd be silly to deny that. If you walked into my home, or Carl's, you'd find us. In what we did and didn't have. Just as you are here in all this.

KHALED
 But - context is everything. Otherwise, yes, some of this I know looks suspicious. I've played this game myself: walked into my studio and wondered what it might say about me; seeing if something would make me out to be something I'm not.

BARTLETT

You're surrounded by the things that interest you.

KHALED

I have a book on assassins, what does that mean? I bet you've seen it and a red flag's gone up.

BARTLETT

What does it mean?

KHALED

Nothing. If I found that book in your home, what would *that* mean?

BARTLETT

It would mean in my line of work it would make sense to study the topic. What does it mean for you?

KHALED

I'm a writer; I read lots of things, for just in case - in case a plot line requires an assassin. I have a book on guns which I'm sure you've selected. (Seeing it) Yes you have. I actually hate guns but finding that you might think gee, okay, here we go.

BARTLETT

Why do you have a book on guns?

KHALED

I told you, I'm a *writer*. I need any number of reference books on different subjects. *That's* the context.

BARTLETT

Okay. Now we know. That's why we have to ask. We have no way of knowing unless we ask. Which means throwing our net pretty wide. Please try not to get worked up in the process.

KHALED

I'm not.

BARTLETT

We're not here to unravel your personal life beyond what we need to know.

KHALED

It just feels this isn't as casual as you make it out to be. You're here for something specific, obviously, something brought you to my door. My name came across your desk and I wish you'd tell me why? If you allowed me to clear that up, maybe you could get on with finding the people you really want.

(Bartlett and Carl stare at him)

I mean I appreciate the effort you're making but I just sense something's being left unsaid and I would really like to address

(MORE)

KHALED (cont'd)
whatever that is. It's like this itch you've brought in that I wish I could just scratch, for all our sakes.

BARTLETT
Huh. Itch.

CARL
(removes his jacket)
Can I use your bathroom?

KHALED
It's right through there.

CARL
"Shukran."

(Carl exits.)

BARTLETT
No, right, it's probably not as casual as I'd like it to be. Though we have begun training sessions on that very subject, strangely, even for old timers like me. "How to put people at ease." I didn't do too bad at it.

KHALED
No, you're - I am at ease.

BARTLETT
Thank you. In fact:
(takes out a form from his pocket)
If I can have you fill this out at the end of this, I'd appreciate it. It's an evaluation form. And then just mail it in. We're trying to get direct feedback from the public. Especially from our target audience.

KHALED
I'd be happy to.

BARTLETT
And if you could use a number 2 pencil.

KHALED
Sure.

BARTLETT
So yes, we try, but at the end of the day, there's no getting around the intrusiveness of all this: What am I doing here? A government official, in your home, going through your stuff and asking you questions.

KHALED
I'd love to know that myself.

BARTLETT

And that's what we'll find out. But in the meantime there's no avoiding the fact that that's who I am. Engaged in trying to find out who you are.

KHALED

I wish there was a way of showing you that I'm nobody interesting enough to have you waste your time.

BARTLETT

And you might not be.

KHALED

I'm not; how can I show you that?

BARTLETT

Well that's the thing. How can you show me that?

KHALED

Is there anything in particular you want to know?

BARTLETT

Is there anything you'd like to tell me?

KHALED

If you told me what brought you here -

BARTLETT

(interrupting)

How about the computer? Anything I might want to see?

KHALED

No. Unless you want to look at a bunch of half-finished stories.

BARTLETT

Half-finished?

KHALED

Most of them.

BARTLETT

Why?

KHALED

"Why?"

BARTLETT

Writer's block?

KHALED

Sometimes.

BARTLETT

How come?

KHALED

It's an occupational hazard. It happens.

BARTLETT

Something going on to make you lose focus?

KHALED

Apart from the world going to hell?

BARTLETT

That inspires some people.

KHALED

Not me.

BARTLETT

It inspires *me* to do the best I can.

KHALED

Well, good.

BARTLETT

What inspires you, if I can ask?

KHALED

I never know ahead of time, that's why it's an inspiration.

BARTLETT

We know some of your interests, right, politics, sex.

KHALED

Not even that. But then, doesn't that cover most people's interests?

BARTLETT

I wouldn't say that. No. You wouldn't find these books in my house.

KHALED

Still, they're pretty basic, whether you have a direct interest in them or not.

BARTLETT

They're basic if you consider them important, otherwise they're not.

KHALED

To be an active, informed citizen? And to have a healthy interest in, in - sex; that's not normal?

BARTLETT

No. No, this isn't normal. I have to tell you, Khaled, none of this is normal. Right about now I would place you a few feet outside of that category.

(MORE)

BARTLETT (cont'd)
(Khaled looks dumbfounded)

To be honest, you are shaping up to be a very unnormal individual. I am frankly amazed at just how abnormal everything is in your apartment. I have actually been growing quite alarmed by what we've been finding. More: I'm getting that uncomfortable feeling that there's more to you than meets the eye and not in a good way. I wouldn't be surprised if we were to turn on that computer and find plans for tunneling under the White House. Or if Carl was to walk out that door having found something very incriminating indeed.

KHALED

You're - joking.

BARTLETT

I try not to joke before drawing a conclusion. It takes away from the gravity of the impression I'm trying to make.

(The toilet flushes.)

Carl. Are you done in there?

CARL

Just washing my hands.

BARTLETT

Can you hurry up, please.

CARL

I'll be right out.

KHALED

What happened to being casual?

BARTLETT

Oh, we're done with that. Could you turn on your computer, please.

KHALED

I - I think I'd like to, er...speak to a lawyer.

BARTLETT

Ah. Uh-huh.

KHALED

I - don't know what's going on anymore.

BARTLETT

I think you do is my hunch.

KHALED

Yuh. Okay. I think I'd like to speak to a lawyer if you don't mind.

BARTLETT

I do mind.

KHALED

I have the right.

BARTLETT

Not necessarily.

KHALED

Yes, I believe do.

BARTLETT

I'd have to disagree.

KHALED

I know my rights.

BARTLETT

What you do have is the right to cooperate with your intelligence and do the right thing and asking for a lawyer is a dumb move because it alerts me to a guilt you may be trying to hide. Which further suggests that I need to switch gears and become more forthright in my questioning; which usually means I become unpleasant. Which *further* irritates me because I'm a sensitive enough guy who doesn't like putting the screws on people and *that* makes me start to build up a resentment towards you for making me behave in ways I don't like....I am perhaps saying more than I should, but you should know where this is heading.

KHALED

(taken aback)

I'd...I'd like you to leave, please.

BARTLETT

I'm sorry you feel that way.

KHALED

I'm sorry too, but I - I think that's advisable. If there's something specific you want me to address, then fine. But. And in that case I would like to have a lawyer present. But I no longer wish to be subjected to this - whatever is going on here, so please. (He gestures towards the door) I'd appreciate it if you - and then if you want me to come in, I'll do so willingly with a lawyer.

BARTLETT

Er, Khaled, you can't have a lawyer.

KHALED

Yes, I can, I know my rights.

BARTLETT

No you don't, you've been misinformed. Could you switch on your computer please?

KHALED

I don't have to do that.

BARTLETT

Yes you do because I'm asking nicely.

KHALED

(moves towards the phone)

I'm - I'm calling a lawyer.

BARTLETT

Is it smut you're trying to hide?

KHALED

No.

BARTLETT

Weird fantasies? Child porn?

KHALED

No!

BARTLETT

Child porn with domestic pets involved?

KHALED

What?

BARTLETT

So then it must be something to do with, what? dicey politics? military info.? blueprints? communiques with the wrong people?

KHALED

(overlapping)

No. What are you - ? None of that. No; that's - .

BARTLETT

I mean we've already established you're a left-leaning subversive with Maoist tendencies who has a thing for bestiality and militant Islam. Throw in your research on guns and assassins and I could have you inside a jail cell reading about yourself on the front page of every newspaper before the week is out.

KHALED

Is this - ? What - ? Are you trying to intimidate me?

(Bartlett stares at him)

No. - Look, I - No.

(goes to the phone and starts dialing)

I don't know if this - if you're kidding me or - but. This isn't -

BARTLETT

Khaled.

KHALED

I don't know what's going on anymore. Something isn't...

BARTLETT

Put the phone down.

KHALED

I don't even know now if you're who you say you are. You could be a couple of con-artists who walked off the street for all I know.

BARTLETT

Would you like to call our office instead?

KHALED

I would like you to leave.

BARTLETT

Okay but put the phone down first.

KHALED

I'm going to call my friend who'll know who I should -

BARTLETT

(interrupting)

PUT THE PHONE DOWN!

(Khaled puts the phone down. Slight beat.)

KHALED

(quiet)

I have rights.

(slight beat)

I do have rights. This is still -

I don't have to show you anything if I don't want to unless you have a -Which doesn't mean I'm trying to hide anything, it just means I care enough about what makes this country - you know - to exercise the right to say no. There is *nothing* on that computer that would interest you, I promise you. And even if there were, I still have the right to -....

(Bartlett continues to stare at him)

They're stories, okay, I told you. Still in progress. I'd rather not have people go poking around something that's still very private. It would be like opening a dark room while the photos are still developing. It would be a horrible violation for me. That may be -

BARTLETT

(interrupting, holds up his finger)

Sorry: Khaled? Hold that thought.

(goes to bathroom door)

(MORE)

BARTLETT (cont'd)

Carl. Could you stop whatever it is you're doing and come out please.

(The door opens and Carl emerges wearing a fatigue jacket and a baseball cap)

Ah. Ah-ha.

CARL

I was searching the pipes.

BARTLETT
(re: the clothes)

Well. There we go.

CARL
(re: the clothes)

In the laundry basket, at the bottom.

BARTLETT

Really. Oh, well.

CARL
(holds up bottom of jacket)

Evidence of nasty right here.

BARTLETT
(feels bottom of jacket)

Yuck.

CARL

Smell it.

BARTLETT

I'll take your word for it.

CARL

Also: (Takes out a swizzle stick)

BARTLETT

A swizzle stick.

CARL

And: (Take out a small piece of paper)

BARTLETT

A receipt. From. (Reads it)

CARL

Guess where.

BARTLETT

Oh; wow.

Look at the date. CARL

Same date. (Bartlett looks)

Wow. BARTLETT

Proof positive. CARL

Looks like it. BARTLETT

He's our man. CARL

Uh-oh. BARTLETT

What? KHALED

Uh-oh. BARTLETT

Why are you wearing that? KHALED

You were where you shouldn't have been, Khaled; in a place you shouldn't have gone to. Bad news. Very bad news. BARTLETT

What is - ? What does that - (re: the receipt?) I don't even remember what that is? KHALED

(Khaled moves to look at it, but Bartlett gives the receipt to Carl, who pockets it.)

BARTLETT

As we shift a little here (he takes off his jacket) I want to assure you of a few things: we will not over step certain lines. We will not violate you or your boundaries in any way. Though we might appear pissed off, you are not to take it personally or feel this is directed at you per se. And though we may resort to slurs and swear words, the aggression is not focused on you so much as it an attempt to create an atmosphere where you might feel more willing to offer up information.

(Over the above speech, Carl has taken a chair and placed it in various spots -

as if to see where they might best place Khaled.)

CARL

Here?

BARTLETT

Anywhere. (Back to Khaled)

KHALED

What are you doing?

BARTLETT

One more thing: at no time should you think this is an ethnic thing. Your ethnicity has nothing to do with it other than the fact that your background happens to be the place where most of this crap is coming from. So naturally the focus is going to be on you. It's not profiling, it's deduction. You're a Muslim and an Arab. Those are the bad asses currently making life a living hell and so we'll gravitate towards you and your ilk until other bad asses from other races make a nuisance of themselves. Right? Yesterday the Irish and the Poles, today it's you. Tomorrow it might be the Dutch.

KHALED

Okay. - Okay, look, look: You need to tell me what the hell is going on.

BARTLETT

We'll get to that. We're doing this as efficiently as we can.

KHALED

Because. I think. Actually, you know.

(moves to the door)

You need to leave. I'm sorry, but - er. I don't have to do this. And I, er, yeah. You need to go. (Opens door)

BARTLETT

Khaled.

KHALED

You need to go.

BARTLETT

Don't be a party pooper.

KHALED

I would be happy do this with a lawyer.

BARTLETT

Close the door.

(Carl moves towards Khaled and the door.)

KHALED

You know what? I need to see your badges again because I'm not even sure anymore.

(Carl takes hold of the door and closes it.)

Can I see your badges again please? Because. Whatever this is, this doesn't feel like it's, er, procedure. This is more like, you know, I mean, you're acting like a couple of, er, thugs, frankly. And I realize intimidation is part of the process, but this is - (a nervous laugh perhaps) speaking of boundaries.

BARTLETT

Anything you don't like, you write it down on the evaluation form.

CARL

You gave that to him already? (Searches his pockets for his form)

BARTLETT

I understand your getting nervous. I don't care for this part myself. We're switching from being civil and congenial to being hard-nosed and focused. It will have the effect of taking away from your humanity and it doesn't do much for ours. Plus we're trying new approaches. It's all new territory for us. Which is why we're handing out these forms.

CARL

Here we go.

(hands form to Khaled)

BARTLETT

You don't like something, write it down. Even if we haul you into permanent lock-up, we're still going to pay attention to your feedback. We might get things wrong in the short term, overdo things, with the interrogation, etc., but our image, honestly, how we come across, that can't be our main priority right now.

KHALED

Interrogate me about what?

BARTLETT

Our image can't be more important than questions of safety.

CARL

We don't give a rat's ass.

BARTLETT

We *do* give a rat's ass. But is it more important?

CARL
(half to himself)
No, obviously we give a rat's ass.

BARTLETT
You care about this country? yes? You want it safe?

KHALED
But I haven't done anything and you're acting like I have, what have I done?

BARTLETT
What is more important: inconveniencing you with accusations of having broken the law or insuring the safety of everyone.

KHALED
But how am I a threat to that, I haven't broken the law!

BARTLETT
I'm speaking about in principle.

KHALED
Even in principle!

BARTLETT
I'm trying to be clear about this. I want the process to be transparent.

KHALED
I'm more confused than ever.

CARL
(to Khaled)
You look like you need to sit down. You're beginning to wobble.

KHALED
What?

BARTLETT
Would you like a glass of water before we start?

KHALED
Am I under arrest?
(neither of them answer)
Am I under arrest? Because if I'm not and you're not taking me in, than you need to - this is over.

BARTLETT
Khaled.

KHALED
You need to go. (Goes to door) I know my rights. This is over.
(Opens door)

BARTLETT

Khaled.

KHALED

You bet I'll fill in those forms. This is - this is way over the line. Acting like some - cut-out pair of thugs playing tag to try and intimidate me. This is my country too, you know. This is my country! It's my fucking country!

BARTLETT

Khaled, the neighbors.

KHALED

I don't care if they hear it, let them hear it!

CARL

Not if you're guilty.

KHALED

I'm not guilty!

CARL

Then sit down and tell us about it.

KHALED

Tell you what? You haven't told me what I've been accused of!

CARL

Shut the door and we'll tell you.

KHALED

I'm not going to tell you anything until I have a lawyer present! This is still America and I will not be treated this way!

(Bartlett quickly walks over to Khaled, grabs him by the arm and drags him into a corner of the room - away from the door, which Carl shuts. Bartlett pushes Khaled into a corner and stands inches from him. While being dragged to the corner, Khaled says:)

What - ? What are you doing? Let go of me. Let go of me.

BARTLETT

First thing: Shut up.

KHALED

No I -

BARTLETT
(interrupting)

Second thing, shut up.

KHALED

No, I won't, I -

BARTLETT
(interrupting)

If I have to tell you what the third thing is, I will shut you up myself.

(Khaled opens his mouth but
is interrupted)

I will shut you up myself.

CARL
(walks over to them)

Listen to the man.

BARTLETT
And if I hear you say "this is still America" one more time I am going to throw up. I will open your mouth and hurl a projectile of my burger down your scrawny traitorous throat. Do you understand me?

KHALED

I'm not a traitor.

BARTLETT

Do you understand me?

CARL

Come on, man. Be cooperative.

BARTLETT
(to Khaled)

If I hear another immigrant spew back to me shit about rights, *I will fucking vomit....* You come here with shit, from shit countries, knowing nothing about anything and you have the nerve to quote the fucking law at me? Come at me with something you know nothing about?

CARL
(to Bartlett)

Easy, man.

BARTLETT
It pisses me off!... "It's my country." This is your fucking country. Right here, right now, in this room with us. You left the U.S. when you crossed the line, you piece of shit.

CARL
(to Bartlett, quiet)

Hey, hey.

BARTLETT
America is out there and it wants nothing to do with you.

CARL

Hey, Bart.

BARTLETT

It's galling. - Sticks in my craw. To hear these people who got here *two hours ago* quote back to me Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers. They're not his fucking fathers.

CARL

They become his fathers. That's what makes this country special, man.

BARTLETT

I *understand*; but it's like they wave it at you like they're giving you the finger. (sing-song:) "You can't touch me, I have the constitution"

CARL

They do have the constitution.

BARTLETT

I *know* that, Carl. I'm just *saying* it's galling to hear it from people who don't give a shit about it.

KHALED

I do give a shit about it.

BARTLETT

No you don't.

KHALED

I do, very much.

BARTLETT

Don't lie to me.

KHALED

It's why I became a citizen.

BARTLETT

You became a citizen so you could indulge in your perverted little fantasies, you sick little prick. Come here, wrap the flag around you and whack off. (He picks up a porn magazine) Well I don't particularly want your cum over everything I hold dear!

CARL

Hey, Bart. (Takes Bartlett aside)

BARTLETT
(to Carl)

I don't!

CARL
I know, it's okay.

BARTLETT
Jesus. *God damn it.*

CARL
I know.

BARTLETT
It's plain to see and we dance around it. We tip-toe and we apologize and we have to kiss their asses.

CARL
Don't blow it.

BARTLETT
I'm not; but sometimes it has to be said.

CARL
Okay, but let's stay on topic.

BARTLETT
This *is* the topic.

CARL
The point of the topic.

BARTLETT
(beat; to Khaled)
And I have nothing against immigrants. Let me make that clear.

CARL
(takes porn mag from him)
Hear hear.

BARTLETT
The more the merrier. God bless immigrants. My great grandfather was an immigrant.

CARL
Mine too. Both sides.

(Carl will start leafing through the
porn magazine.)

BARTLETT
This country wouldn't be anything without them. God bless every fucking one of them. My family worked damn hard to make this country the place it is. And if you came here to do the same I will personally roll out the red carpet for you. But if you've come here to piss on us. To take from us. Pick all the good things this country has to offer and give nothing back and then
(MORE)

BARTLETT (cont'd)
dump on us?...then I don't think you're making a contribution,
not at all.

KHALED
I am making a contribution.

BARTLETT
You're *unemployed*. You're on *welfare*.

KHALED
I have grants

BARTLETT
That's *taking*.

KHALED
It's a prize.

BARTLETT
For what?

KHALED
For my stories.

BARTLETT
You haven't finished one.

KHALED
For past stories.

BARTLETT
You're blocked, you aren't writing, that means all you're doing
is taking from the system.

CARL
(still leafing through the
magazine)
Leeching.

KHALED
I *am* writing, I'm just stressed out.

BARTLETT
You're involved in something you shouldn't be, that's why you're
blocked. It's hard being creative when all you're thinking about
is plotting destruction.

KHALED
I'm not, why are you saying that? *what are you accusing me of?*

CARL
The point is he doesn't have anything against immigrants. Let's
be clear about that.

BARTLETT
(to Khaled)
I'm *dating* an immigrant.

CARL
She gave you her number?

BARTLETT
(to Khaled)
This is not why I'm pressing down on you. Apart from the reservations I just spoke about, the best thing going for you now is that you are fresh off the boat.

CARL
(re: the girlfriend)
You lucky bastard.

BARTLETT
If it turns out you're not involved in any of this shit, I will personally apologize and invite you out somewhere. In the meantime, why don't you show Khaled why he's neck deep in doo-doo.

CARL
Love to.

KHALED
What?

CARL
(searches his pockets; to Bartlett)
Hey, you know I met Miss September.
(referring to the porn magazine)

BARTLETT
Who?

CARL
When I was helping the guys out on vice. Miss September. Just the nicest person. Devastated the attacks came on her month and ruined what could have been her big breakthrough. Was ready to quit until some guys wrote in saying how her body helped them through their darkest hours.

BARTLETT
(not amused)
Great.

CARL
(reaches for his jacket)
Now she only does spreads for special occasions. Usually to do with law enforcement.

BARTLETT

I don't really need to hear this.

CARL

(searches his jacket pocket)

I'm just saying, funny, huh? You never know what gets some people through the night. For some it's like, you know, the Church. For others -

(finds what he's looking for)

it's a place like this.

(he shows Khaled a photo)

Ever been to this strip club?

(Khaled tries to focus on the photo)

Well we know you did because here you are in this photo.

(shows him another photo)

Hidden in this hat and jacket I'm wearing, but: now that I'm wearing it we can pretty much say it's you. You can make out your jaw under the hat, and the earlobe is always a distinguishing feature. It's you, right?

(Khaled looks but doesn't answer)

BARTLETT

Khaled.

CARL

Plus we have your receipt from the club and a bunch of other stuff that places you there.

KHALED

Why are you - ? Why was this - ?

CARL

So it is you.

(Khaled hesitates)

I would acknowledge the obvious so you can quickly move ahead and establish your innocence, if that's the case. Which is not obvious.

BARTLETT

It's far from obvious.

CARL

I'd use this opportunity to clear up your name, if I was you.

(Khaled is about to speak but is interrupted; sotto voce:)

And look, man, don't be embarrassed about going to these joints. I've frequented these places myself. I'm not as hung up about this as Bart here is.

BARTLETT

I'm not hung up about them.

CARL

What I'm saying is someone in this room understands.

BARTLETT

I *understand*. It was the cow that put me off.

CARL

Personally, you can whack off all you want. You can take your johnson and do what you want with it, as long as it's legal. We're not here to judge you for what you do with your dick. What's that expression in Arabic they use? About a fool and his schlong? Anyway. If you're just embarrassed to admit you go to strip joints, don't be. I love a good lap dance myself. That ass waving in your face. The thighs working up a sweat.

(shows him the photo again)

You, right?

KHALED

Look I...I don't know where you're heading with this. I'm not going to incriminate myself when I don't even know what I'm being accused of. You asked if you had my permission to come in here and everything, well, you don't anymore, I'm sorry.

BARTLETT

We're so past that, my friend. Right now you're standing on our permission not to be disappeared into little atom-sized pieces of nothingness; and then shoved up the crack of the fat ass you'll be sharing a cell with. The best thing you can do for yourself is to identify yourself right now, and I mean right now.

(Carl sticks the photo in front of Khaled's face.)

KHALED

You can't tell anything. It's too dark. It's a silhouette for chrissakes.

BARTLETT

Then maybe we shed some light. Would that be helpful?

CARL

Shedding light is always a good idea.

BARTLETT

(to Khaled)

This is going to be like pulling teeth, isn't it. Carl.

CARL

I'm ahead of you.

(Carl goes over to the closet doors as he takes off the baseball hat and jacket.)

BARTLETT

Exhibit number one:

(shows Khaled another photo)

Have you seen this guy?

(Carl slides open one of the doors, revealing ASFOOR: erect, still. Perhaps a spotlight from within the closet is shone on him. Also helpful if a sound effect of some sort accompanies the opening of the door.)

Of course you have, he's been in all the papers. "Terribilis Carnifex", bringer of chaos, exemplar of horror and ghoulish behavior and very committed. And dead of course. Dying at the conclusion of his mad little goal. As a writer do you often wonder what might have been going through his mind at that instant he knew he'd accomplished his goal? Do you? I do. I wonder what he saw - just before he stopped seeing. What he thought, before he accomplished seizing everyone's mind and focusing it on him and his odious little ways. I admire him, you know. If I was an evil little shit, I'd want to be him. That's commitment for you. Dedication.

(to Asfoor)

What *did* you see, by the way?

ASFOOR

Nothing.

BARTLETT

What did you think?

ASFOOR

Nothing.

BARTLETT

Unfortunately, I can't get into his mind. But he did do a lot of typing.

(Asfoor goes over to Khaled's computer. He will start typing.)

Quite the wordsmith. If a little cryptic. We've been able to trace most of his e-mails. Worked out of a library not too far from here. The librarian remembered him. Said he was like a dark cloud that changed the mood the moment he walked in. But said she felt sorry for him nonetheless. Reminded her of Pigpen, she said.

(Carl slides open the other closet panel revealing SHELLY, wearing glasses.)

SHELLY

Like in "Peanuts".

BARTLETT

Ah.

SHELLY

(enters studio)

You know, the way he always had this cloud of dirt around him.

BARTLETT

I see.

SHELLY

That way. I thought it might be sadness at first, and felt the urge to say something to him. Cheer him up.

(to Asfoor)

It's a wonderful day. We haven't had this much sun in weeks.

(Asfoor turns to her without saying anything)

Have a nice day.

(to Bartlett)

Didn't say much in return. No, I can't say he did. Barely smiled. His eyes were so...(can't find the words)

BARTLETT

Yes?

SHELLY

Piercingly nondescript. As if I was looking at a description of a pair of eyes, and not the eyes themselves. Of course all these impressions may be hindsight.

BARTLETT

What do you mean?

SHELLY

You know, how new information about a person suddenly makes you see that person in a different light. I'm sure if you'd told me he'd saved the lives of a family from a burning house I'd be remembering him differently. - Though probably not.

BARTLETT

Anything else?

SHELLY

Well...

(hesitates)

He may have misread my attempts to be nice. Because one day he followed me into the room where we archive rare maps. And, well,
(MORE)

SHELLY (cont'd)

made a pass at me. Didn't know he was there until I felt his hands. I screamed, of course. Pushed him away. I even had to use one of the rolled up maps to ward him off. I kept thinking, I hope it doesn't come to anything violent because this is the only existing map of a county in eighteenth century Pennsylvania.

BARTLETT

Why didn't you report the assault?

SHELLY

I don't know why I didn't. - I didn't want to give it - importance. Perhaps if I had you would've caught him and none of this would have happened. I'm sorry. How do you recognize evil?

BARTLETT

We appreciate the information you're giving now.

SHELLY

All I saw was an awful sadness. I had no idea his hurt had no end.

BARTLETT

Thank you, Ms. Shelly. If we have any follow-up questions we'll contact you.

SHELLY

I wish...

(to Asfoor)

I wish you hadn't done that. I wish there had been a way to get to you earlier, before things turned; before your mind went away. Because it has to go away to do that, doesn't it? Become so narrowed that nothing else matters. - I wish I could talk to you. - I would even let you...touch me, again. If it would open you up. If I could talk to you one more time; and find out more about you. Everyday I walk into a building filled with more knowledge than I could ever hope to digest. But none of the books can explain to me why you did what you did or who you are....I wonder if you'd even be able to tell me?

BARTLETT

Thank you, Ms. Shelley. Carl will show you out.

(With one last look at Asfoor, Shelly heads for the front door. Carl opens the door and exits with her.)

BARTLETT

I don't suppose you've ever seen this man up close?

(Bartlett briefly picks up a library book.)

KHALED

Because we used the same *library*?

BARTLETT

Locked eyes across a library table?

KHALED

That's the connection? It's the only library for miles, *everyone uses it*.

BARTLETT

(continuing)

Rubbed shoulders in the book shelves. Shared books? e-mails?

KHALED

(overlapping)

That's what brought you here? You don't think I wouldn't have come forward if I'd seen him, if I'd have had any information about him.

BARTLETT

Perhaps you did and didn't know it; look at him again.

(He's shown the photo. At this point, if not before, Asfoor is up on his feet.)

KHALED

I know what he looks like. I would've remembered.

BARTLETT

Look at him again.

ASFOOR

Khaled.

KHALED

You're not going to pin this on me just because I went into the same *building*.

ASFOOR

I'm bleeding into you and there's nothing you can do about it.

BARTLETT

Pin what?

KHALED

Jesus Christ, I've been *wanting to help*.

BARTLETT

(overlapping)

Pin what? You may have seen him, that's all.

KHALED

I *wept for this country*.

ASFOOR

So did I.

BARTLETT

I'm trying to jog your memory, you may have forgotten something, seen him at the computer.

KHALED

I know what you're doing and I'm not going to be screwed by something this flimsy. I will not be dragged in by association of having used the same space!

BARTLETT

Khaled: calm down; you aren't being accused of anything yet.

ASFOOR

We're all in this together.

BARTLETT

Perhaps you have some insight into this e-mail he sent; it's translated:

ASFOOR/BARTLETT

"Nothing the matter today. On Wednesday, I cut myself opening a can of tuna. Don't worry about that. Do you know Luxor? It's worth seeing."

BARTLETT

Or:

ASFOOR

"Tattoos, yes. Do it where the skin folds so you can hide it if you change your mind."

ASFOOR/BARTLETT

"I have a list for you."

BARTLETT

Is "Luxor" part of your e-mail address or how you sign off?

KHALED

No. "Luxor"?

(pointing to the computer)

Check it. This is like twenty degrees of separation. Then everyone in that library is a suspect. I use books, for chrissakes, I'm a writer.

BARTLETT

So you keep telling me.

ASFOOR

You're blocked, I can help.

BARTLETT

Ms. Shelly can't be definite she saw you two together, all the same she did say -

KHALED

(interrupting)

How would she know who I am?

(Asfoor picks up a book.)

BARTLETT

I showed her your photo.

KHALED

Where'd you get that?

BARTLETT

Your ex-girlfriend.

KHALED

(digests the information)

How many people have you talked to exactly? What did Beth say?

BARTLETT

(consulting his notebook)

But Ms. Shelly does think she saw him nearby when you came to ask for a book one time.

ASFOOR

(reads title of book)

"Caravans of God and Commerce."

BARTLETT

Remembers it because you kicked up a fuss when they didn't have it.

ASFOOR

(reading from book)

"The road to Mecca was perilous, and not only because of the dangers of the desert."

BARTLETT

Says he stood a few feet away until you had finished and then followed you out.

ASFOOR

(reading from the book)

"But also because of those who hid in them."

KHALED

What?

ASFOOR
(accent, to Khaled)

Excuse me, sir.

KHALED

No.

BARTLETT

Said there may have been an exchange between you.

ASFOOR
(to Khaled)

I know book you want. I help you find it.

KHALED

That never happened. You don't think I would have remembered that? I'm a terrible liar. It would be obvious if was lying.

(Asfoor has put down the book; Bartlett picks it up.)

BARTLETT

I believe you. But you did find the book.

KHALED

In a book shop, I bought it.

BARTLETT

He never followed you out? Told you where you could find it?

KHALED

No.

BARTLETT

Perhaps the librarian did remember it wrong but if we speculated on this encounter that never took place, what might have happened?

KHALED

What kind of sense is that?

BARTLETT

He followed you out and:

KHALED

What am I supposed to speculate on?

BARTLETT

You're the writer, you tell me.

ASFOOR

Assalam alaykum.

KHALED
(disoriented)
I can't remember what never happened.

ASFOOR
Assalam alaykum.

KHALED
(awkwardly)
Alaykum salaam.

ASFOOR
(in Arabic)
I know that book you want.

KHALED
I don't speak Arabic.

ASFOOR
(in Arabic)
No?

KHALED
I'm sorry, I'm in a hurry.

ASFOOR
Please. A moment. I would like - my name is Gamal. Gamal Asfoor.
Hello.

KHALED
Sorry but I have to go.

ASFOOR
I like to learn English. With you.

KHALED
I - no, I'm sorry.

ASFOOR
You teach me. I pay.

KHALED
I can't. I'm really busy right now.

ASFOOR
(hands him a piece of paper)
My number here. I teach you Arabic. You Arab, yes? I watch you.
I watch you in the library.

KHALED
No thanks. Thank you, no, goodbye.

ASFOOR
I know book you want. I get it for you.

KHALED

Really, I can't.

(to Bartlett)

That's ridiculous. There was no encounter. You're making stuff up.

BARTLETT

Well of course I am. You of all people should appreciate the importance of doing that. How that might lead you, stumbling, to a truth or two. Facts aren't the only game in town. Perhaps it never happened, then again, here are the Arabic books. In this story we're making up, maybe he gave them to you.

KHALED

What kind of deductive leap is that? That's worse than guessing.

(Asfoor goes to sit at the computer)

BARTLETT

From his letters we know he shared similar interests with you: writing, poetry, Middle-Eastern stuff, politics, radical books, porn, didn't much like women. Said some nasty things about women in his letters.

ASFOOR

(at the computer)

"Unclean."

BARTLETT

God knows what his childhood must have been like.

ASFOOR

"They corrupt. They diminish you. When I die, do not let them touch me."

KHALED

What on earth does that have to do with me?

BARTLETT

Well, Khaled, not knowing you; not really knowing much about you; just from meeting you and casual observance I would have to say your relation to the opposite sex seems to have a kink or two in it.

(Khaled looks at him
dumbfounded)

Maybe you two commiserated and found solace in the same twisted images and depictions.

KHALED

I don't know who you're talking about anymore; it's not me.

BARTLETT

I'm just saying.

KHALED
(overlapping)
This is beyond making stuff up, this is Alice in Wonderland.

BARTLETT
Your girlfriend had a lot to say on the matter.

(A knock on the door.)

KHALED
I knew it. She started this whole ball rolling, didn't she.

BARTLETT
I didn't say that, but she was helpful.

KHALED
She's the one who called you.

BARTLETT
The word "betrayal" came up a lot.

KHALED
(continuing)
Something completely personal gets blown up because an ex holds a grudge. Great.

(There's another knock on the door.)

BETH
(off-stage)
I'm coming.

(BETH enters from the bathroom in a bathrobe. She is drying her hair with a towel. Overlapping with this:)

KHALED
You're going to take the word of someone who's *pissed off with me*?

(Beth has opened the door to Carl.)

CARL
(shows her his badge)
Goodmorning. Ms. Granger?

KHALED
(overlapping)
For something completely unrelated?

CARL
I wonder if we could talk with you a moment.

BETH

What is this about?

KHALED

Jesus, talk about the personal being political; now she gets to drive home that point and nail me with it.

BARTLETT

(looking at his notebook)

She said some interesting things right off the bat.

BETH

So he was involved after all.

CARL

What makes you say that?

BETH

Was he like one of those cells that get activated?

KHALED

She said that?

BARTLETT

Why don't you let me finish first.

BETH

That would make sense. His whole life seemed to be one big lie. I don't think he has an honest bone in his body. What did he do exactly?

CARL

We're just trying to get a better idea of who he is at this point.

BETH

When you find out let me know. Because I sure as hell didn't. You spend two years with someone thinking you have a pretty good idea of who you're shacking up with, then boom, he pulls some shit that makes you wonder who you're sleeping with.

CARL

Like what exactly?

BETH

And I like to think of myself as an intelligent person.

CARL

What in particular made you -

BETH

(interrupting)

Just everything. He never seemed to come clean about anything. Always keeping things close to his chest, like he had another

(MORE)

BETH (cont'd)

life going on. It wouldn't surprise me if he was involved. Though I can't imagine he was high up in whatever structure they have. I could admire him if he was. But he's too weak for that. More like a wannabe. Like someone who would be quite willing to take instructions, if you know what I mean.

CARL

I don't; can you explain that?

BETH

Like he knew his life was for shit and something like this would give it meaning. He had that writerly thing of never feeling solid enough about anything. Of being woozy about most things. Of course when you imagine you're in love with someone, all their faults feel like unique traits that give them character. It's disgusting how love can dumb you down. Anyway, what else do you want to know? So like I said, it would just make sense. He never would tell me what he was working on or what he did when he went out. He just shut me out after a while. Could you turn around, please.

(Beth has finished drying her hair and now selects a dress from the closet. She will proceed to put it on. Carl turns around.)

BETH

And then there was that quarrel we had soon after the attacks.

CARL

What quarrel would that be?

BETH

I almost flipped out because I thought he was actually gloating.

KHALED

That's enough, stop, stop, this is bullshit.

BARTLETT

(consulting notebook)

That's the word she used: "Gloating."

KHALED

I never "*gloated*", that's insane.

BARTLETT

(consulting notebook)

She went on to say that she felt you were almost -

BARTLETT/BETH

Defending them.

BETH

Praising them even.

KHALED

That's a lie.

CARL

Are you sure about that?

BETH

It sure sounded like that to me.

KHALED

She's twisting everything.

BETH

(to Carl)

I don't think that would be an exaggeration.

KHALED

(to Beth)

That's not what I meant.

BETH

(to Khaled)

That's how it sounded.

(If light changes have been accompanying the transitions of time/new characters, a light change would also signal the shift here.)

KHALED

I'm just saying we have to look for the "why"? Why did they do this?

BETH

Because they're evil assholes. Are you justifying this?

KHALED

Why are you so frightened of trying to figure this out?

BETH

Because if you go down that road then you're saying somewhere down the line there's a coherent argument for what they did. A legitimate reason. And there are some things that simply do not deserve the benefit of an explanation and being "enlightened" on an act like this would just be so fucking offensive. I don't want to know why they did this? *I don't care.*

KHALED

Don't you want to make sure it doesn't happen again?

(At some point, Khaled moves to help Beth zip up her dress, but she refuses his help. The exchange continues over this.)

BETH

Next you'll tell me this is all our fault.

KHALED

Do you or do you not want to make sure this doesn't happen again?

BETH

And your solution is what, we should flagellate ourselves? It's not enough they fucked us over, now you want us to finish the job by beating ourselves up? Paralyze ourselves by examining our conscience?

KHALED

Our *policies*.

BETH

That's your idea of defence?

KHALED

We'll finish the job they started if we don't. You've always been able to see the bigger picture, why can't you see it now?

BETH

(to Carl)

It was more than what he was saying. It was an attitude. The way he looked. And I used to think we shared the same politics.

KHALED

(to Bartlett)

That is a complete - I wasn't justifying anything. I was saying let's get at the root causes so we can stop it once and for all. Where do you get "praising them" from that?

BETH

(to Carl)

There was almost like a gleam in his eye. Like he was saying "it's just what you people deserve."

KHALED

(to Beth)

No.

BETH

(to Khaled)

You all but said it.

KHALED

Why aren't you hearing what I'm saying?

BETH

It was a rape, Khaled. It was a rape multiplied by a thousand. You don't go up to the woman who just got raped and say, you know what, I think you probably deserved that because you go
(MORE)

BETH (cont'd)
 around flaunting your ass so what do you expect. And if you want to make sure it doesn't happen again, then maybe you should go around in a fucking burqa.

KHALED
 (disbelief, then:)
 The United States of America is not a woman who just got raped. The United States of America is the biggest, strongest eight hundred pound gorilla on the block.

(Beth heads for the door)
 You can't rape an eight hundred pound gorilla, even if you wanted to. Where are you going?

(she doesn't answer)
 Beth.

(She starts to open the door but he shuts it.)

KHALED
 Where are you going?

BETH
 You have a nerve. Like you tell me.

KHALED
 I just want to know.

BETH
 Why? Are you afraid I might say something to someone?

KHALED
 What are you talking about? - Beth: speak to me, you're freaking me out.

BETH
 I followed you, you know.

KHALED
 What?

BETH
 Those times. When you went out. When you thought I was at work.
 (to Carl)
 I should also tell you that I thought he was having an affair. I'm still not sure he wasn't. I think he was doing personals, or a chat room or something. Or that's what I thought. He certainly was at the computer a lot. It must have been something steamy because every time I approached him he would do something to hide the screen.

(Beth approaches Asfoor at the computer. Asfoor blocks the screen by turning around to face her. He smiles.)
 Or he would turn it off. I became convinced he'd hooked up with
 (MORE)

BETH (cont'd)

someone. Met someone on line. Our sex life...well never mind that. He denied it of course. We had blow ups about it. So...one day, I followed him. I wanted an answer once and for all. So I followed him. To the park, where he met up with this woman....It was strange. It didn't last long. He talked. She gave him something, then left. When I asked later what he'd done he said he'd been in all day working. The second time I followed him was the day I was to leave on a business trip. Only this time the person he met was a guy.

(Asfoor stands, goes to the closet, grabs a different hat and jacket, puts them on and waits at another point in the room.)

Again, it only lasted minutes. And it kind of weirded me out. Later I thought that was because I was thinking, oh no, Khaled's bi and we've been living a bigger lie than I thought. But it didn't have that vibe. Khaled looked almost - frightened. Once again it was quick. Khaled left first, then the guy.

(Asfoor exits through the front door.)

I left for my trip and told myself I'd deal with it later. Then the attacks happened and none of that mattered for a while. But when I confronted him he freaked out.

KHALED
(to Beth)

You've been what?

BETH
(to Khaled)

I called. You were never at home when you said you were supposed to be.

KHALED
You *followed* me? How dare you?

BETH
Don't turn this around, I'm fucking supporting you while you're supposed to be writing.

KHALED
That doesn't mean you *own* me.

BETH
Who were they, Khaled?

KHALED
Fuck you, no, it's none of your business.

BETH
I thought you were having an affair; but now I'm not so sure. Now I'm actually worried. With the things you've said in the
(MORE)

BETH (cont'd)

past, and now, and these meetings, and your secrecy. Yes, I know you don't like to talk about what you're working on, only you've been working on it for as long as I've known you and you have nothing to show for it. Are you having an affair? Either you're having an affair or you're up to something you shouldn't be. Either one makes you a slimy little shit. So which is it? Tell me or I swear to God I will tell someone what I'm thinking.

KHALED

You can't be serious.

BETH

I am, I'm really wondering.

KHALED

Beth. It's me.

BETH

Great, now tell me who that is.

KHALED

We're all freaked out by what's happened. Don't flip out on me.

BETH

Why couldn't you be up to something. Why not? I'm not sure I even know you.

KHALED

Okay, stop.

BETH

I'm not sure I've ever known you.

KHALED

You're flipping out, stop it.

BETH

No, tell me. You don't talk about your self or what you do. Your past is a fog. Suddenly you have material on subjects I had no idea you're interested in.

KHALED

What are you doing? This is like some 50's B movie, "I married a communist".

BETH

Are you fucking around on me?

KHALED

No!

BETH

Then you must be up to something you shouldn't be and I'm really starting to freak out.

KHALED

(grabbing her)

Would you just shut up. You can't talk like that. Not now. Not even for a joke, people take this shit very seriously.

(Beth just looks at him)

Beth, Jesus Christ, wake up. I'm not a stranger.

BETH

(to Carl, looking at Khaled)

It's funny how people change on you. I mean normally, when you don't think you might be staring at a murderer. How you can be so fascinated and in love with someone and then find all that fall away. And the person stands there naked and butt ugly and you get angry at yourself for ever having wanted this man. I really hope these attacks haven't permanently spoilt my views on love.

KHALED

(to Bartlett)

It was a literary group.

BETH

(to Carl)

Imagine; that's what he said.

KHALED

For writers; to exchange ideas.

BETH

It was like watching a man hide himself in one box after another; like those Russian dolls.

KHALED

(still to Bartlett)

I'm not joking, that's what it was.

BETH

I gave up after that. A few days later I asked him to move out.

CARL

Would you still have a picture of him?

BETH

I don't know; I can check.

CARL

I'd appreciate that.

(She exits. Carl makes notes.)

KHALED

Jesus. No wonder you beat a path to my door. For God's sake. She has an ax to grind. It was a list-serve for writers. We actually discussed plot-lines and books. And yes there was some flirting going on, so what; my moral behavior is not on trial here. And the guy was a jerk because he passed himself off as a woman on line, and - he was just an asshole and I left. That's it. The sum total of my secrets. You could frame anything with enough menace and make it seem more than it is.

(Slight beat)

CARL

Bart.

BARTLETT

Yes, Carl.

CARL

Can I talk to you?

(Bartlett and Carl move off to talk in private. Carl speaks sotto voce throughout this next exchange.)

BARTLETT

What?

CARL

Look: I'm thinking something.

BARTLETT

Go for it.

CARL

I don't think what we're doing now is getting us anywhere.

BARTLETT

Really? I feel like we're making head way.

CARL

Not - no.

BARTLETT

I think we've loosened his bowels and he's going to shit any second.

CARL

No, he's going to hold off because he's fixated on some idea of procedure. He thinks there's some script we're supposed to follow and that will protect him. He'll keep us a few facts shy of the truth and piss us off. The photo *is* too dark. And the clothes are generic. Important, but.

BARTLETT

The receipt is pretty damning.

CARL

We need him to spill his guts.

BARTLETT

What are you suggesting?

CARL

There's an imbalance of authority right now and we need to correct that.

BARTLETT

I tried that already and you pulled me off.

CARL

Yes. But with all due respect, I think I know these people a little better. I've been there. I know how they think. There's some dark shit you have to know how to access.

BARTLETT

Carl - we're not allowed to do that.

CARL

(gets out a small guidebook)

Actually, if we don't hit any vital organs, we can.

BARTLETT

No, I don't think so.

CARL

(reading)

"Section eight, paragraph two. Wilful damage is not permitted but a relaxed, consistent pressure on parts of the body that may be deemed sensitive is allowed. As long as the suspect remains conscious and doesn't scream longer than ten seconds at any one time. Some bruising is allowed."

BARTLETT

(looks at the guidebook)

Huh. I need to re-read this. I completely missed that.

CARL

It has surprisingly useful tips. Especially on how to use simple appliances like microwaves to help you interrogate better.

BARTLETT

You're suggesting what?

CARL

To bring the full weight of our authority to bear on him. With the aim of making him adjust his expectations as to what options are available to him.

(Slight beat)

BARTLETT

Fine....But gently.

CARL

Thanks.

(They turn to look at Khaled.)

KHALED

What?

BARTLETT

(to Carl)

I'm going to use the john.

CARL

Take your time.

BARTLETT

(to Khaled)

Can I use your bathroom? - Thanks.

(Bartlett exits into the bathroom. Carl stares at Khaled.)

KHALED

What's going on?

CARL

Khaled.

(walks up to him)

There's no easy way to segue into this. So I'm not going to try.

(Carl kicks Khaled in the groin. Khaled gasps, grabs his testicles, and collapses onto his knees)

First off: that has been coming since we got here, because of repeated references to an innocence that is not yours to claim. If you were innocent, why would I have kicked you? Something you've done has given me good cause to assume the worst. The responsibility for that kick lies with your unwillingness to assume responsibility for the part we know you played. We need to know what that was. It might have been a bit part, but never think that makes you a bit player.

(Khaled doubles over and lets out a strangled cry)

Khaled. - Khaled.

(Khaled topples over as he lets out a more sustained cry)

Don't overdo it. I didn't hit you that hard. - That's not pain you're feeling, it's shock. You're overwhelmed by the *notion* of

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)
pain - that more might follow - not what I actually did.
(Khaled expresses more of
his pain)
Enough with the dramatics or I'll give you something to really
scream about.

(Bartlett opens the bathroom door,
looking concerned)
It's nothing. We're good.

BARTLETT
What happened?

CARL
He's faking it.

KHALED
(strangled)
No.

CARL
It's shock. I was abrupt.

BARTLETT
Over ten seconds.

CARL
But he's conscious and it wasn't a sustained cry.

KHALED
What are you doing?

BARTLETT
(worried)
Carl.

CARL
It's under control. Go finish what you were doing.

BARTLETT
Absolutely no bones.

CARL
One more kick and I'm done.

BARTLETT
This has to lead to something.

CARL
The info is in the bag.

KHALED
(windy; to neighbors)
Help.

(Bartlett gives Carl a worried look
before going back into the bathroom.
Khaled starts crawling towards the door)

Help me.

CARL

If you'd've kept your nose clean, then you wouldn't be here,
would you, crawling on the ground, trying to get away from the
next hit that's sure to come if you don't tell us what you and
Gamal got up to.

KHALED

Please.

CARL

We know you talked with him.

KHALED

No.

CARL

You met up. In the strip joint.

KHALED

I'm not hiding anything. I swear to you.

CARL

We have the receipt. It's as good as a photo.

KHALED

I don't know what you're talking about.

CARL

You really give a bad name to immigrants, you know that. Because
of you we have to pass tougher laws that stop people who might
actually be *good for us*.

KHALED

I haven't done anything wrong!

(Carl either kneels on Khaled's chest or
else grabs him around the neck.)

CARL

God: I know your type, so well. The smiling little Semite who
gives you one face while trying to stab you with the other.
You're pathetic, you know that. If you hate us, then just hate
us. But you don't have the balls to do even that. You bitch and
you moan and complain how overrun you are by us and all the time
you can't wait to get here. You'd kill for a visa. That pisses
me off. That's hypocrisy. Why not just come clean and own up
that you hate everything this country stands for.

KHALED
(winded/strangled)

No.

CARL
No, that's right, because you're too busy *envying us*.

KHALED
(winded/strangled)

Get off me.

CARL
I could snap your neck just for that. What's the expression for "fuck-face" in Arabic? "Hitit khara?" "Sharmoot?"

KHALED
(winded/strangled)

You're crushing me.

CARL
Just how crushed do you feel, Khaled?
(slight beat, then:)

Alright, I'm done.

(he lets go and stands up.
Beat)

Now do you want to tell me what you and Asfoor got up to in the strip club? Were you passing a message on to him? Were you the internet guy? The guy to help him get around? A carrier for something? What? What? Tell me, or I'll -

(Carl pulls his foot back as if to kick him.)

KHALED
(flinching at threatened kick)

No!

CARL
(continuing)

I will. I'll exercise my drop kick on your testicle sack and make you sing an Arabic song in a very unnatural key.

KHALED
I'm going to be sick.

CARL
You're going to be sick. I'm the one who's throwing up. Only I have the decency to do it quietly, inside, and not make a public spectacle of myself.

(perhaps grabbing Khaled by his lapels)

What did he want from you? What did he want? What fucked-up part did you play in all of this? What happened with you in there?

(MORE)

CARL (cont'd)

What happened when you met up with Asfoor? What did he want?

(Khaled opens his mouth as
if he's about to vomit.

Carl lets go as Khaled dry
heaves. Slight beat)

You know what I really resent?...What you force us to become. To protect ourselves. We are a decent bunch and do not want to be dragged down to your level. But no, you just have to drag us down, don't you. You have to gross us out with your level of crap. I personally hate this, you know that. I hate it when I have to beat the shit out of someone because then by an act of willful horror, whose effect on my soul I can only imagine, I have to shut out everything good about me to do my job to defend and protect. Here I am quickly devolving into a set of cliches I can barely stomach and you have the nerve to think you can vomit. No, it is I who am throwing up, sir, and if I see one scrap of food leave your mouth I will shove it back so far down your throat you'll be shitting it before you even know what you've swallowed again.

(Beth enters dressed in a coat now. She carries a photo.)

BETH

I found this.

(Carl steps away from Khaled.)

It's pretty crumpled, but. I threw most of them out.

CARL

Thank you. (He looks at photo) This will help.

BETH

Look - I...I just want to say....I have no idea if he was involved in anything. I know I've said things to suggest he might've been. But I'm just telling you what I thought at the time, when we were all upset. Being a major disappointment and a shit doesn't make you a criminal.

CARL

Understood.

BETH

Okay. - Good. - Just so I don't feel I'm - you know. - This isn't about revenge.

CARL

Believe it or not, safeguarding the innocent is as important apprehending the bad guys.

BETH

Good. Okay. Well....Bye.

Thank you. CARL

(She exits. As soon as the front door closes, the bathroom door opens and Bartlett enters. He walks over to Khaled, who is still prostrate on the ground.)

Anything? BARTLETT

He has a better idea of what's at stake. CARL

Anything solid? BARTLETT

Authority has been reestablished. That was important. CARL

Facts? BARTLETT

On the verge. CARL

Verge is where I left him. BARTLETT

Oh I think he's ready to talk. I think he knows we're not looking for sequential sentences that add up to poop; but details that fit in nicely with what we know happened at the club. Where you went to get a hard-on while plotting death and destruction. CARL

Can we get him off the floor. It looks bad. BARTLETT

(Bartlett gets the chair as Carl moves to pick him up.)

He's such a drama queen. CARL

The last piece of the puzzle fits, my friend. You were there. We had surveillance cameras. It wasn't your girlfriend who gave you away. It was your pecker. BARTLETT

(they sit him down)
You should have followed your religion's advice and avoided all depictions of the human form because that's what did you in.

CARL

Time for exhibit number four, I think.

BARTLETT

If we absolutely must.

CARL

You completely overlook her patriotism, you really do.

BARTLETT

I must have missed it. (To Khaled) We'll tell you what happened and you just stop us if we have it wrong, okay?

(Throughout this next section, Khaled remains dazed, in shock. Carl will slide open both closet doors.)

On a Tuesday night, August 21st, at around 10:05, you went to the "EyeFull Tower Club"; where a Ms. Jean Sommers, aka, Kelly Cupid, "Dancer Extraordinaire and Stripper Artiste", as she calls herself, was performing.

(With the doors opened, a dancing pole is revealed. Light change in the closet to simulate club lighting. Perhaps a disco ball effect and a couple of spot lights. JEAN SOMMERS is already at the pole. She is dressed for the act: elements of a cowboy outfit, including two pistols slung on each hip. She might also be wearing a wig.)

The date on your receipt proves it and so does Ms. Sommers.

JEAN

I do. Anyway I can help, gentlemen.

CARL

Much appreciated.

JEAN

Will you want to see my act now?

BARTLETT

Is it relevant?

CARL

It might be. Clearly they met here for a reason. Your act may have been a signal of sorts. A series of unintended semaphores that spelt out a message to commence something. Why don't we have a look just to cover our bases.

JEAN
So you do want to see it?

CARL
You bet.

JEAN
You got it. Music.

(Appropriate music starts and she performs her act. More burlesque and pole dancing than strip-tease. After it ends, slight beat.)

BARTLETT
I don't see how they could have passed messages through that.

CARL
Maybe not, but it doesn't hurt to check.

JEAN
That was the shortened version.

BARTLETT
When did you first notice him?

JEAN
The first time he came or the second?

CARL
Are we talking dates, or?

JEAN
(smiling)
Yeah, dates.

BARTLETT
The first.

JEAN
Hardly at all. Except he was nervous and sweaty. Which isn't unusual when I come on. And he had a couple of books. I thought maybe he was a college grad trying to cram for an exam.

BARTLETT
Hardly a place to study.

JEAN
You'd be surprised. I see more and more people with lap-tops. We've begun to offer plug outlets in our lap-dance area.

BARTLETT
Anything else, that first time?

JEAN

Not really. I give full attention to my act. I believe in giving your best regardless of what you're doing.

CARL

It shows.

JEAN

Others leave their body when they do this, I don't. To me my body is a celebration of who I am and I give it to others as a revelation. I try to be your average Joe's desire incarnate. With a little extra thrown in for the more discerning. Nobody leaves my act feeling short-changed.

CARL

Kudos.

JEAN

Thanks.

BARTLETT

Anything else at first glance?

JEAN

No, he was just a set of eyes. It was later. When he asked for a lap-dance that I had more time to observe him.

CARL

(showing her Khaled's photo)

And you're sure it was this guy.

JEAN

Yeah, kinda. It was dark and he was wearing a baseball cap. But I'm pretty sure. And he was wearing this fatigue jacket.

(Bartlett picks up the baseball cap and fatigue jacket to show to Khaled.)

BARTLETT

Any chance you remember the book titles?

JEAN

Yes, as a matter of fact. I'm always curious what other people are reading so I looked. One was on tatoos, and the other had something something in the title - ending with God, which I thought was an odd combo. I plan on going back to college you know.

BARTLETT

So what happened next? When you went one on one?

JEAN

Well...

(moves towards Khaled.
(MORE)

JEAN (cont'd)
 Appropriate music for a
 lap dance fades in quietly
 in the background)

I began my routine. The usual. I was feeling less than on that day. I had been groped earlier and was not feeling well-disposed to the horny. But I do have a work ethic, like I said, and so I danced. I always give my best.

(she starts to sketch in
 some of her moves)

Even to people who turn out later to be scum who want to do us harm. Did I tell you my father was a marine?

CARL

No.

JEAN

Highly decorated. My outfit in many ways is a salute to him. That's what he was before he joined up. A cowboy, out west. At night, sometimes, he'd let me wear his medals.

BARTLETT

What can you tell us about Khaled.

JEAN

That's his name, huh?

BARTLETT

Yes.

JEAN
 (while dancing over a seated
 Khaled)

If I had him again...I know what I'd do with him. Coming here to do that to us.

BARTLETT

Well, we don't know for sure if he's - .

JEAN
 (interrupting)

I'd say touch me, Kaled, so the bouncers can come and smash your stupid face in. Coming here to get off on me while all the time wanting to do shit to us. Wrapping your women in black and then sneaking in here and getting your rocks off. I could pluck your eyes out. I could bend your dick round and fuck you up your own ass.

BARTLETT

Your sentiments are understandable. But if you could tell us what happened next.

JEAN

I should have known something was up. I thought he was extra sweaty because he was just too close to something he couldn't
 (MORE)

JEAN (cont'd)

have. But it wasn't that. He was always looking around to check for something. It kinda pissed me off he wasn't giving me his full attention. At one time I stuck my boobs in his face and he actually moved his head, like I was blocking his view. I thought, what the hell are you doing here then? I take pride in what I do and expect some respect. Don't act like you're bored. I decided then and there to make him come. But then this guy shows up. Stands a few feet away and stares. Just stares. Like he'd paid for this show as well. "Do you mind?" I say to him.

BARTLETT

(shows her Asfoor's photo)

This guy?

JEAN

Yeah. It was dark, but yeah. Both of them were Middle-Eastern, that I know. So I tell him to piss off but he just stands there and this Kaled is looking at him. Suddenly his attention is full on him. And he's changed. Like he's frozen or something. And this guy just stares and he's looking at Kaled and me. And I say again, "do you mind?" And he looks at me and his eyes - they're like, I'm-going-to-get-you eyes. Only they're smiling and it's creepy. And then he leaves to the rest-room. And Kaled starts to rise like he wants to follow. Only I push him back down. I'm really pissed off at this point, like I've been insulted. Like my skills have been called into question. So I did something I never usually do. I reached down and squeezed.

(she does so)

Just one time. And that did the trick. I finished him off. So easy....Then he springs out of that chair and into the rest-room.

(the music stops; she moves
away from Khaled)

And that would have been it; I would have moved on, onto the next customer, but something about them really annoyed me. So I looked for them to come out; to say something, like have some manners the next time, the both of you, and don't come back. But fifteen minutes later, they're still in there. And I say this to Stewart, one of the bouncers and he says let me check, and I say, no, let me do it. If I can embarrass these guys I will, so I go in.

(she opens the bathroom
door)

And...

(a laugh)

Damn if I don't see both of their legs under one of the stalls. And - they must have heard me, because Kaled comes shooting out and runs, just runs past me. And out saunters Mr. Creepy after him. Calm as can be, like he'd just been holding a meeting in his office. And I'm thinking - no, I actually say to him: "take that shit somewhere else." And he stares at me again, and this time it's scary. Real scary. Like he's telling me he could snuff my life out with his pinkie if he wanted to. So I get out of

(MORE)

JEAN (cont'd)
there and tell Stewart about it, only they're both gone when he goes round to check....And that's my story.

BARTLETT
Did you get a sense of what they might have been doing in the stall?

JEAN
Not a clue. Might have been sucking each other off for all I know. Or shooting up. Who knows. At least one of them's dead. Have you got the other one yet?

CARL
We're working on it.

JEAN
I wouldn't mind getting him in that chair again. Give him a good thwack from me if you find him, care of Kelly Cupid.

CARL
Will do.

JEAN
Anything else I can do for you?

CARL
Not at the moment.

JEAN
Well...I'd better get ready for my act then.

CARL
Maybe we'll come back to check out the longer version.

JEAN
I'd like that. I'd hate to think my routine was being used for a nasty purpose.

(Jean smiles at Carl, then exits. Carl closes the closet doors.)

(Bartlett and Carl turn to Khaled. Bartlett drags a chair and sits opposite Khaled. Carl either sits on the edge of the table, next to Khaled, or stands over him.)

(Khaled looks at them.)

(Beat)

KHALED
She's lying.

BARTLETT

Here's where I have to pry a little more than I like to. Can we - look at your pecker? Please? Very briefly. To clear something up. Cause this thing about tatoos keeps coming up.

(Khaled makes to bolt out of his chair but Carl pins him down, wrapping his arms around his chest, immobilizing his arms. Bartlett puts on a latex glove.)

BARTLETT

I'm sure it's nothing. I bet it's nothing. But it sure does make me wonder.

(Bartlett starts to undo Khaled's trousers. Khaled writhes in his chair in protest. This can be done with most of Khaled's back to the audience. Alternatively, this can take place on the futon, with the agents blocking most of the audience's view of Khaled.)

KHALED

No. - No.

BARTLETT

(overlapping)

What with that e-mail he sent about tatoos, and the book, and doing it where the skin folds, where you can hide it.

KHALED

(half in tears)

Stop it. No. - No.

BARTLETT

(overlapping)

Was there like some secret mark you each showed yourselves? To ascertain something? Membership? Commitment? What were you doing in there for fifteen minutes? Excuse me. This is embarrassing for me too.

(He has yanked Khaled's pants down far enough for him to look.)

What's that? Is that a birthmark? Or?

(Carl also looks.)

What is that?

CARL

Liver-spot?

BARTLETT

(still looking; slight beat)

Yeah....Yeah. It's what it looks like....That couldn't be a tatoo, could it?....I wish we'd bought our camera with us....Next time.

(he continues to peer, then:
a light slap on the thigh
to indicate he's finished)

Alright.

(he stands)

Thank you. Apologies for that. Not a part of the job that I like.

(Carl lets go, Khaled covers himself with his hands, and starts to pull up his trousers but Bartlett prevents him from doing so by placing his foot on his trousers.)

But it still leaves us wondering what you did all that time in the bathroom with one of the more hideous individuals we've come across? Now would be the time to fess up to any deviant sexual inclinations. It might get you off.

(Slight beat)

KHALED

(quiet)

I was never there.

BARTLETT

(slight beat)

Alright....We're going to leave you to think about it. Come back later, tomorrow. We'll take a few things with us now.

(he nods to Carl to take the
lap-top)

Look them over. Assess what we have. What needs filling in. - What might have occurred to you overnight.

(he picks up books from the
pile)

And then talk some more. You're not taking any long-distance trips, are you?

(looks at Khaled, then moves
to the door)

Here're your choices, Khaled, that you can think about. Either you're innocent. In which case proving that might be difficult. Or you're guilty, in which case telling us now would score you points because we'll find out soon enough. Or: you're innocent of being guilty. You didn't know what you were getting into. Stumbled into it. Through deception. Other people's. Your own stupidity. And that would be okay too. We can work with that. We can work with you to make that seem plausible.

(at the door now. Carl
carries the lap-top)

Think about it. And about those evaluation forms: they're no

(MORE)

BARTLETT (cont'd)

joke. It's your chance to respond. That's what this is all about. At the end of the day, we're fighting to safeguard that right. It sounds counter-intuitive. But that's the struggle for freedom for you. It's never as straight-forward as you'd like it to be.

(slight beat)

CARL
(to Khaled)

"Ma'salamma."

BARTLETT
(turns to Carl)

What does that mean?

CARL

Peace be with you.

BARTLETT
(to Khaled)

I can go with that.

Peace be with you.

(They take one last look at Khaled who remains slightly bent over, covering his crotch. They exit and close the door behind them.)

(Beat.)

(Khaled pulls up his trousers. Beat.)

(The closet doors slide open revealing Asfoor. He enters the room.)

ASFOOR

You...you help me, yes? You and me, private class. I have...I have need to - to learn. Quickly. Yes?...When first I come to this country - I not know how to speak. How...even to say anything. How one word best is placed with what word next. Yes? But in my head? It is a river of beautiful speech. Like in Arabic. Arabic is....It is the way into my heart. But everywhere, when I open ears, first thing, everywhere now, is English. You not get away from it. Even back home, before I come, I hear it more and more in people who do not speak it. I say, I must learn language that is everywhere. Language that has fallen on our heads and made us like - like children again. What is this power? What if I know it? I say to them, send me there so I learn this. I want to learn. And in my heart, I say I want to write. I want to write a book. In English. That is goal, yes? And one day, I say...

(while accent is maintained,
the broken English
(MORE)

ASFOOR (cont'd)

gradually starts dropping)

I might even teach it....I will teach language back. I will make them speak their own language differently. I will have them speak words they never spoke before. I will make them like children too, speaking words over and over to make sure they understand it. And soon my language will also fall on their heads. Like theirs falls on ours. Exploding in our brains till we can't even dream in peace.

(slight beat)

And so they sent me....They send me.

(Asfoor draws closer to

Khaled. Khaled does not

look at him)

And now...my tongue...it wants to rise. Soar. As it used to. It wants to take off in this new language and conjure up brilliant words. It wants to do things in English that seemed so impossible for so long. I can help you find your voice too....You're stuck. I know you are. You've lost your way. I can feel it. I can help. Most of all...above all else, Khaled...I know how to inspire....I know how to inspire.

(Beat. Blackout.)

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Press on the following link to answer the course's assignment:

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